STOURBRIDGE
CHRONICLE

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PARENTS' PLEA TO SAVE SERVICE

WORRIED parents have signed a petition calling on Dudley Council to scrap proposed cuts to free transport for children with special needs.

The 859 signatories also object to plans to close two centres supporting children with speech and language difficulties.

The criticism has prompted council bosses to extend its consultation on the matter, meaning a final decision will be delayed. Dudley Council is seeking to save a total of £27 million over the next three years. Bringing in both proposals would save the council more than £250,000 each year.

The authority currently pays for dozens of children with additional needs to travel to specialist nurseries in the borough but says it is not legally required to do so.

Marc Carter, who runs the WeLoveCarers charity in Brierley Hill, said: "I am very pleased with the numbers we have got signing this petition but I'm not surprised because it is such an emotive issue.

Alternatives

"It shows that Dudley Council need to be talking to people and looking at the alternatives available.

"We know there has got to be savings and there are lots of things to be cut but we simply don't see how these proposals will save money.

"If the transport is cut there will need to be more local provision in existing nurseries. We are not talking about one or two nurseries, we are talking about them all."

The council currently pays for 49 children to travel to specialist nurseries in the borough.

Mr Carter knows first

By Dominic Bareham

hand the value of the service having previously used it to transport his autistic son to Netherton Park nursery.

He added: "Ben would not have coped in a mainstream busy nursery. I didn't have a car and I lived near Russells Hall at the time so the service was vital."

Under the proposed cuts two centres supporting children with speech and language difficulties in Dudley will also close. Parents say they have been left fearing their children could be placed into mainstream schools where they would have difficulty coping.

Campaigners say they will fight the cost-cutting moves. But council bosses claim they have been forced to consider axing the service after Government cuts.

From September, Dudley Council is proposing to deliver the specialist service at just one site, Hob Green Primary School in Stourbridge. This would mean centres at St Margaret's at Hasbury Church of England Primary School in Halesowen and at Quarry Bank Primary School both closing. It would see the number of places available drop by eight.

Tim Crumpton, Dudley Council's children's chief, said the changes would improve the service.

500 brave rain for Action Heart run

The Action Heart runners set off after Mayor of Dudley Councillor Margaret Aston put them under starter's orders

HUNDREDS of people braved the cold and the rain to take on the Action Heart five-mile run and walk.

The annual fundraiser for the Action Heart charity saw around 500 runners start and finish at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley on Sunday.

Money raised from the event will be donated to the hospital's Action Heart Centre, which is based in a purpose-built block at the hospital.

This year's fun run was extra special as it marked the 25th anniversary since it was first held and some competitors took part in fancy dress.

The course started from the hospital site, then down Himley Road, Coopers Bank and Tansey Green Road before returning to the hospital.

Many of the participants included hospital workers, while the course was manned by 40 stewards who have received help from Action Heart.

The charity provides the largest cardiac rehabilitation programme in the country and the money raised during the year pays for heart rate monitors and gym equipment.

First runner home was Sam Lloyd-Perks of Halesowen Athletics Club in 27 minutes and 30 seconds.

First of the female runners was Tessa Clarke of Wolverhampton and Bilston in 29:36.

Among the runners was Nikki Wilkinson from Coseley. As well as helping Action Heart, the 42-year-old was raising awareness of autism as her daughter Amy has the condition. She took up running a year ago and is a member of the Dudley and Kingswinford Running Club. She said: "It was quite a challenge but well worth it. I was trying to finish in under an hour."

Nikki reached her target, at just over 58 minutes, and now has sights set on the Dudley and Kingswinford 10k run in September.

Rents for market's traders are frozen

RENTS for traders on Dudley Market will be frozen for the fourth year in a row to help boost business in the wake of the major town centre revamp.

Dudley Council says it has no plans to increase fees for the 'foreseeable future' despite needing to make savings of £27 million during the next three years.

It comes as work continues on a £6.7m redevelopment of the historic market place in Dudley High Street.

Traders are due to move to their new stalls as part of the 74-pitch market next month.

Temporary

They have been using temporary pitches in other parts of the market place and Stone Street Square at busy times since the redevelopment work started.

Councillors say the rent freeze will help reduce upheaval when the stalls move back.

The move has been welcomed by Dudley Market Traders Association as work on the revamp enters its final stages.

Market traders association chairman, Len Lenihan, said: "I think that having the rents remain the same is a sensible move at the moment."

Police blitz on car cruisers

MORE than a dozen car cruisers have been targeted in the first crackdown by police after tough new rules banning race meetings on a main route through the Black Country.

Police were out in force on the Black Country Route in Bilston, the Birmingham New Road and in areas of Dudley, Darlaston and Walsall on a major operation to enforce a new court injunction. They hit cruising hotspots in a four hour operation and 15 drivers had been issued with warnings.

Councillor pressures developer over site

A COUNCILLOR has criticised a developer over delays for a new play area at a former hospital site.

Derrick Hemingsley, who represents Wordsley, said residents had been waiting more than two years for children's play facilities at the development on the former Wordsley hospital site in Auckland Road.

The play area was due to be installed by Dudley Council and funded with £30,000 from developer Persimmon as part of the scheme for 400 homes.

Councillor Hemingsley claimed the developer was consistently 'dragging its feet' and a water leak also a needed fixing on the site.

Duncan Shaw, technical director for Persimmon Homes South Midlands, said the developer had been in regular contact with Dudley Council.

"The issues relating to the water/spring have been resolved and Dudley Council wishes to monitor the open space for a short period to ensure that the issue does not return," he said.

"Persimmon and Dudley Council have agreed that the public open space will be transferred to the authority once this short monitoring period has been completed and the legal plans have already been prepared."

Warning after motor thefts

POLICE patrols have been increased following a spate of car crime in Stourbridge.

Officers from the Wollaston and Stourbridge Town team have highlighted the number of car break-ins.

They urge motorist not leave items of value on show and advise them not to leave engines running while windscreens defrost.

Police will give residents an update at a meeting on April 1 at St James Church Hall, Belfry Drive, Wollaston, from 7pm.

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Addict turned dealer to settle debt

A DRUG addict's bid to settle a debt led to him being jailed for two years and eight months.

Michael Dickens was persuaded to pay back what he owed to his dealer by selling heroin and cocaine for him. The 48-year-old defendant was caught by police after being loaned a car and mobile phone, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

Officers stopped the nine-year-old Ford Focus Dickens was driving in Brierley Hill on September 15. Mr Michael Conry, prosecuting, explained: "They were acting on intelligence and noticed that the defendant was extremely nervous and shaking when answering simple questions."

Wraps of heroin and cocaine worth a total of £720 were found in his pockets when he was searched.

Mr Conry continued: "He admitted dealing in drugs for somebody else and being paid in drugs to feed his own habit. He said that the car and mobile phone had been provided for him and he was simply following orders."

Miss Nicole Steers, defending, said: "He felt he had no alternative. He owed a debt to his dealer and there was an element of pressure. It was made very clear there would be consequences if he did not do as he was asked."

Dickens, of King Street, Dudley, had previous convictions for shoplifting and drug offences and was on licence following a jail term for producing cannabis.

He pleaded guilty to possession of heroin and cocaine with intent to supply.

Cost of children in care is rising to over £2m

TAKING more children into care is expected to cost cash-strapped Dudley Council more than £2 million in the next three years.

Bosses have revealed an extensive plan to reduce the number of youngsters it has to take into care in an effort to save cash.

The council will set up a new commission to work with other agencies and undertake a 'robust review' to see how numbers can be decreased.

But a report ahead of a cabinet meeting being held yesterday (Wednesday) warned that the new body may not be able to deliver financial savings until 2016.

Costs have soared in recent years placing huge financial strains on the authority which is battling cuts in Government funding.

Council bosses have revealed they have been unable to reduce the numbers in its care as quickly as it predicted. There are currently 754 'looked after children', which has fallen from 772 in September last year.

Ambition

But the total remains much higher than before the recession took hold. In 2010, the figure was 480.

Councillor Tim Crumpton, cabinet member for children's services, said: "Our ambition is to ensure as many children as possible live with their families and our work around early support services continues to reduce the numbers in care.

"By establishing a commission to address issues around looked after children we will be ensuring the council uses a whole system approach, working with partners such as health and schools to help create the right conditions to support families."

Last year the council warned it was looking at a £1 million shortfall in its children's services budget

Police start to close the front desks

FRONT desks at Stourbridge and Halesowen police stations will close this Saturday, February 28.

The move comes as West Midlands Police looks to save £3 million. The force is axing 27 front counters over 12 months.

Others in the Black Country closing on that date include Aldridge, Willenhall, Wednesfield, Tipton, Wednesbury and Old Hill.

The counter at Dudley Police Station was not included in Saturday's closures after Dudley North MP Ian Austin launched a campaign calling for the facility to be saved. Mr Austin presented policing minister Mike Penning with a petition containing more than 2,000 signatures to keep the station open to the public. He is planning to present it to Parliament and wants more residents to support the campaign.

Mr Austin said: "It is encouraging that they are listening to local people but the threat hasn't yet been lifted and we need to step up the campaign. It is completely unacceptable that Dudley could become the largest town in the country without a police station open to the public."

Come blow your harmonica

Well I'll Be Blowed — harmonica club member Eric Houghton 81 from Wollaston

A GROUP of musicians with a love for the humble harmonica are seeking new members.

Stourbridge-based 'Well I'll be Blowed' was formed fives year ago by retired engineer Eric Houghton and they currently meet at Age Concern's Elton Centre on St John's Road. But the group needs new members.

Eric, aged 81, is keen for the group to flourish and is urging experienced players and novices alike to come along to join in.

"If you have got a good ear for music the harmonica is quite easy to play," he said. "That is an important starting point but after that we can help people to play a bit better than they did before."

He explained the sessions have a relaxed atmosphere with everyone getting a chance to play. "We chat and see how practice has gone over the past week. Then we get stuck into a list of around 20 to 25 tunes."

The group meet on Wednesday evenings from 7pm.

Roadworks to cause delays for motorists

MOTORISTS are being warned to expect disruption as work began this week to replace a section of gas pipe in Gornal Wood.

Engineers from National Grid will be carrying out the project in Louise Street for seven weeks.

New Street will be partially closed at the junction with Louise Street to allow the project to take place.

During the first two weeks, New Street will be closed to through traffic from Louise Street to Musk Lane. Then Bull Street will be reduced to one-way traffic travelling from Louise Street while the remaining work is completed.

Motorists are advised to find an alternative route and allow extra travel time for additional congestion.

Motorists in Stourbridge are also being warned they face seven weeks of disruption due to roadworks near the town centre.

Crumbling gas pipes are being dug up and replaced between Heath Lane and Corser Street. Temporary traffic lights were to be put up in Love Lane this week.

Drivers travelling through the area over the next two months have been told to allow more time for their journeys.

Big Centre TV set to go live

A NEW digital television channel serving the Black Country will go live this weekend.

Big Centre TV, based in Walsall, will begin broadcasting on channel eight on Freeview at 6pm on Saturday, February 28.

The channel is co-owned by former ATV presenter Mike Prince and Wolverhampton-born Chris Perry.

It will also cover Birmingham and Solihull and will see former Central TV sports broadcaster Bob Hall as its head of news and sport. It is broadcasting from Walsall Studio School.

More parking

BOSSES at a school in Kingswinford have unveiled plans for a new car park to put an end to a battle for spaces.

An extra 47 spaces will be made at Summerhill School, Lodge Lane. The car park will be built on the site of the former music block.

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Borough handed £1.7m by Lottery

MORE than £1.7 million was invested into Dudley last year through National Lottery grants.

Across the area, 54 grants were awarded to local projects including arts, sports and heritage groups.

Projects that benefited from the grants include Stourbridge Football Club, which received £46,000 to refurbish its changing rooms, and Homer Hill Park, which received £10,000 to install new play equipment.

Around £2,300 was also awarded to The Brierley Hill Project to buy computers for young people not in education or training.

Actor and performer John Barrowman, who presented last year's National Lottery Awards show, said: "Every National Lottery player should feel proud of the incredible difference they are making to the local community. They raise an astonishing £33 million every week for a huge variety of life-changing projects.

"The National Lottery Awards offer a chance to celebrate the fantastic work of Lottery-funded projects. If you know of a great project that deserves to shine, then please nominate them for an award."

Council tax to stay frozen

A FREEZE in council tax for the fifth year running was set to be approved at a meeting yesterday (Wednesday).

Dudley Council's cabinet was gathering to rubber stamp the proposals for the borough.

The bill for a Band D property would remain at £1,125.35 for 2015/16 after the council secured a £1.2million Government grant to freeze council tax.

Council leader Pete Lowe said: "I am confident that we will continue to have the lowest council tax in the West Midlands."

Roll out barrels

REAL ale enthusiasts can choose from 90 different tipples during Stourbridge Beer Festival from April 15 to 18. The event organised by the Stourbridge and Halesowen branch of CAMRA takes place at Stourbridge Town Hall. See www.stourbridgebeerfest.org.uk

Complaints put chips back on menu at hospital

CHIPS are being put back on the menu at Russells Hall Hospital following complaints from patients.

The hospital meals service has been overhauled over concerns about the lack of choice and meals not being hot enough.

Uninspiring offerings received a lukewarm response on the wards, forcing bosses to rethink what is on the menu.

Derek Eaves, quality manager at the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, said patients on wards where the new menus had been trialled had welcomed the return of chips.

He told Dudley Council's Health Scrutiny Committee: "Compared with the old menus, on the pilot wards there is certainly a lot more appreciation for what they are getting.

"Chips are not particularly nutritious but they are being re-introduced because it's what they want. We are listening to patients but we have to balance that out against nutrition.

"Patient satisfaction has gone up since."

It came as concerns were again raised about offerings for patients by members of the committee.

Improvements

A survey in 2013 showed that only 44 per cent of patients were happy with what was being served up. Since then bosses have been working to make improvements to the meal service. Providers Interserve invested £500,000 into overhauling the service.

A wider choice will be made available as well as new trolleys that warm plates.

For lunch and supper, patients will have the choice of four hot meals, four cold options, six side dishes and a variety of hot and cold puddings.

This is in addition to the 24 hot dishes available to pre-order from the special menu, which includes gluten free, dairy free, vegan, vegetarian and halal options.

Several unpopular meal options have been dropped.

Taxi drivers may strike over delays in retests

TAXI drivers have vowed to go on strike over a row with council bosses involving delays at a Dudley testing centre.

Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Drivers Association say its members are being forced off the road due to waiting times.

MoTs can be carried out at any garage, but more specific checks to ensure taxi safety must be done at Dudley Council's own garage in Brierley Hill.

The council recently moved from a single bay testing facility in Netherton to one capable of seeing two cars at the same time in Narrowboat Way.

But if vehicles fail tests, drivers claim it can be three days before they can secure a retest, losing them income while their car is off the road.

Taxi driver Abrar Munshi, aged 33, from Stourbridge, says he lost up to £300after having to rebook a test when his vehicle failed for a faulty headlight and brakes.

But he says after taking his car to a garage to be repaired, they gave the car a clean bill of heath – and when it was retested by Dudley Council's own inspectors it passed having had no work done to it.

Mr Munshi, who works for Falcon Cars in Stourbridge, has made a formal complaint to the council about the issue.

"I have lost confidence in the tests," he said.

"This is costing us money.

By Andrew Turton

"I have made an official complaint to the council."

Association chairman Shaz Saleem said: "We are going to have a meetingbut we may have no choice but to go on strike.

"If the council can't handle the number of cars then we must be allowed to use independent garages. "

Dudley councillor Rachel Harris, who oversees taxi licensing, said: "Our priority is that the taxi and private hire vehicles in the borough meet the highest standards to ensure passenger safety.

"For that reason we want all vehicles to go through our MoT testing facility in Brierley Hill, where we have worked closely with Vehicle and Operator Services Agency and other agencies to put in a testing regime, using automated technology, that is consistent.

"We will continue to talk to the association to ensure our residents and visitors get the highest standard of service."

Hospital hits targets again

RUSSELLS Hall Hospital has once again bucked the national trend by hitting Accident & Emergency targets. There were 1,809 attendances at the hospital's A&E unit last week and 96.8 per cent within four hours, one of the best figures in the country.

The Dudley hospital has repeatedly hit the target in recent months. It comes as the national figures drop to an average of 91.6 per cent.

John Oakes, chairman of Hagley Gardening Club, is appealing for more members

Can you dig it at garden club?

A GARDENING club is searching for new members as it celebrates its 40th anniversary.

The Hagley Gardening Club was started by about 26 allotment holders in the village to enable gardening enthusiasts to hear interesting talks on horticulture. It has up to 70 members attending its meetings.

The club's chairman John Oakes said the organisation was keen to recruit new gardeners.

He said the club had a busy diary of events planned including a talk on Wildflower Meadows in March.

Staff from Worcestershire County Council will also be giving a talk about waste management, entitled Waste Not, Want Not.

Mr Oakes added: "The benefits of joining a group like this are a lot like watching TV shows on gardening because you get to expand your knowledge and you meet people who are like minded."

Meetings are held monthly at St Saviours Church Hall and guest speakers are invited to give presentations and show slides.

For more information about the club call Mr Oakes on 01562 882006.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Couple will win a wedding venue

DUDLEY Council is offering a free wedding at its popular Priory Hall in Dudley.

The prize draw will be held at the venue's open day on March 7 where couples will get the chance to win free use of the venue, valued at £350.

Councillor Rachel Harris said: "Our wedding open day attracts couples from across the borough eager to visit our beautiful Priory Hall venue, pick up tips and get inspiration for their big day."

The open day runs from 10am to 4pm.

Workshops help out-of-work men

JOBLESS men in the borough are being offered advice and support on how to cope with unemployment.

Social enterprise Forward for Life is delivering an eight-week programme of workshops on behalf of Dudley Council's office of public health.

The free half-day workshops will cover mental health awareness, confidence building, promoting self-esteem, suicide prevention, self-care and wellbeing. For more information call 07585776800.

Pianist in charity concert at school

A CHARITY concert is being held to raise funds for a piano scholarship and village church funds.

Ayaki Davies, a piano teacher at Edgecliff High School, Kinver, will lead the performances at St Peter's Church on April 18. Students will also be performing. The concert is at 2.30pm with tickets priced £6 adults and £3 students and children.

Call (01384) 551000.

Flats memories sought for project

RESIDENTS on a Brierley Hill housing estate will celebrate 50 years since their flats were built. People are being asked to share memories of the properties in Chapel Street as part of a project. Call Rachel Harris on 01902 490139, or email cllr.rachel.harris@dudleymbc.org.uk or visit www.facebook.com/ChapelStreetEstateTRA.

Speedy warning

WARLEY MP John Spellar has welcomed calls for all speed cameras to be painted yellow.

He has backed the call from Labour's transport spokesman Michael Dugher.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

I HAD no idea they were inviting bids from volunteers eager to go to Mars and never return to Earth. Why can't we nominate other people? I've got a little list . . .

FUNNY how your opinions can change in an instant. I had always been vaguely opposed to the European Arrest Warrant. How can it be right that English folk can be arrested on English doorsteps and hauled off to be tried in foreign courts? And then you see the footage of Chelsea fans ("We're racists and that's the way we like it") abusing people in the Paris Metro and you think, oh, bring it on. Chuck 'em in the police van and next stop, Calais.

FORTY years of health and safety legislation and it comes to this. In New Zealand, two cops spot a woman whose car has rolled into a harbour. She cannot escape and is minutes away from drowning. The officers jump into the water, grab a slab of concrete, smash the rear window and drag her to safety. Are we not all appalled at such recklessness? Did either of these officers conduct a full risk assessment? I doubt it. Have they attended an approved course on jumping into water? Were they aware of the microbial risks of entering a harbour without protective clothing? Have they undergone hypothermia training? Were they qualified in all aspects of handling large pieces of masonry? It is intolerable that members of the emergency services think they should provide some sort of service in an emergency. Back to the classroom, everyone.

I ASSUMED Boris Johnson was trying his hand at comedy last week when he penned a stirring column warning that a Labour government would strip Britain's armed forces and leave us defenceless. How can you not respond with a hollow laugh, looking at the wasteland of defence left by this Tory government? Twenty thousand fine British soldiers have been sacked and the Reserves (formerly the TA) are collapsing before our eyes. I remember years ago an old true-blue, Tory-voting artillery major who served through the Second World War and the Cold War telling me sadly: "We always do better under Labour than the Tories." The theory is that when Conservatives get their hands on the armed forces, the bean-counting instinct takes over but when Labour forms a government, the old working-class patriotism kicks in.

ED Miliband says the Black Country has nothing to fear from joining a combined council with Birmingham. His spin-doctors have obviously not informed him that the proudest boast of any Blackcountryman is "Ar bay frum bloody Brum." (I am not a resident of Birmingham).

SO Labour is going to get a grip on tax dodging. The snag is that, while there will always be a small percentage of millionaire families (the Milibands of Primrose Hill, for example) who use clever, and entirely legal, strategies to keep their tax liabilities to a minimum the biggest form of tax dodging is the sort used a million times a day by small businesses. "Knock a few quid off for cash?" asks the customer, and the plumber/window cleaner/electrician gladly agrees. Now, the tradesman may be using cash payments to dodge VAT and income tax. Or he may simply prefer cash because it saves him the bother of taking yet another cheque to the bank. So over to you, Messrs Miliband and Balls. How do you sort the bona-fide from the fiddlers? The Balls answer is for customers to demand a receipt for work done. So that's higher prices for the customers, more paperwork for traders, battalions of tax inspectors to monitor every bank account and crawl over every scribbled receipt, and, presumably, some penalty on customers who don't keep their receipts. Is that what the two Eds want? If so, do let us know so we can all get the house rewired or painted before May 7, General Election day.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Pledge to root out dishonest officers

POLICE chiefs have pledged to take all appropriate measures to 'root out internal corruption' after a special constable was handed a suspended sentence for fraud.

Mahesh Randeria, 51, of Stourbridge, admitted claiming over £1,300 more than he was entitled to in mileage travel expenses between October 2010 and November 2013.

At Birmingham Crown Court he was given a four-month prison sentence suspended for 12 months. He was also ordered to pay back £1,343.50 to the force. Randeria, of Teasdale Way, will have to pay court costs.

Police said he had worked for the force 28 years and had been based at Birmingham Central Police Station.

He earlier pleaded guilty to fraudulently claiming travel expenses.

Randeria has been suspended from his role as a special and will be subject to an internal disciplinary process now the criminal investigation had been completed.

Following the hearing, Chief Inspector Darren Walsh, from the force's professional standards department, said: "It is vital our communities have trust and confidence in everything we do. Therefore, West Midlands Police demands the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and conduct from all police staff and police officers at all times.

"We take any allegations of dishonesty very seriously."

The court was told suspicions had first been raised was an audit was carried out and the discrepancies had been revealed.

£211m revamp plan for council housing

THOUSANDS of council homes across Dudley are to be renovated as part of a planned £211 million investment programme.

There will be revamped central heating systems, replacement windows, kitchens and bathrooms as part of a package of upgrades for rundown council properties rented by the borough's 23,000 tenants.

More than a quarter of the money – £61.7m – will be spent improving empty properties to ensure they can be re-let.

By Rob Cox

And more than £23m will be spent on the outside of properties including the replacement of around 10,000 windows each year.

Councillor Gaye Partridge, cabinet member for housing, said: "As the biggest provider of secure tenancies in the borough and as a landlord we are committed to investing in our properties to make sure they have heating, adequate windows as well as modern kitchen and bathrooms.

Commitment

"This investment in our housing stock shows our commitment to the very best council homes. We are responding to the fact that many people are struggling and we are looking to agree a freeze for council tenants."

Councillors are set to approve the plans this week.

A report states £17.1m will be invested to improve the efficiency of central heating and provide more affordable heating in 4,675 homes in an attempt to reduce fuel poverty.

Nearly £15m will spent re-roofing homes to ensure they remain sound and watertight with work to include the use of energy efficient materials.

And a total of £13.4m has been set aside for adaptations for those living with disabilities including the installation of level-access showers, stair lifts, vertical lifts and ramps.

Internal improvements such as plastering, replacement floors and new kitchens and bathrooms will take up £11.2m of the budget.

The five year proposals also include plans to spend £38.8m on building around 350 new council homes.

Part of this is being spent on converting the former Mount Pleasant School in Coseley into 16 homes.

A total of 99 homes constructed on six sites in 2012 were the first council housing to be built in more than 20 years.

Call to back Fairtrade

SHOPPERS in Sedgley will be asked to support the millions of farmers and workers who produce the bulk of the food they eat during Fairtrade Fortnight.

A series of informative events will be held until March 8 where people will have the opportunity to buy Fairtrade foods, which give more benefits to producers. Clunis Cheswoth, of Sedgley Fairtrade Initiative, said: "Fairtrade has paved the way for fairer and ethical trading but there is still a long way to go as trade isn't working for the poorest farmers in the global south." More information is available at fair trade.org.uk/fortnight

Jack's secret to a long life

Jack Jones celebrating his birthday with care assistants Jade Hind and Yvonne Chambers

WHEN Jack Jones was born in 1908, King Edward VII was on the throne and Ford was preparing to release their first affordable automobile, the Model T.

Now Jack, at the grand age of 107, is celebrating his landmark birthday with his family around him and a pint of Banks's Bitter. Jack, who was originally born in Enville and now lives at the Tudor Manor care home in Brook Lane, Stourbridge, was inundated with presents, cards and visits from family and friends.

Having spent much of his life as a lorry driver, before going on to make parts for cars at the Austin factory in Longbridge, and then parts for fighter plans during the Second World War, Jack puts his longevity down to hard work and doing what you love.

He said: "If you aren't doing what you love then why bother? You have to keep yourself going and keep yourself active through hard work."

Jack lived on his own until aged 105, after his wife Winn passed away 23 years ago.

Step in the right direction for health

PEOPLE looking to improve their fitness can borrow pedometers from libraries in Dudley to help them step towards fitness

It is hoped the scheme will encourage residents to walk more or take up jogging.

The scheme is part of Dudley Council's Let's Get campaign which promotes healthy lifestyles.

It has been spearheaded with the launch of a website where people can find information on exercise and nutrition. The site gives each user the chance to form and track their own tailor-made healthy living plan to suit their own goals and lifestyles.

Active

Cabinet member for health and well-being on Dudley Council, Councillor Rachel Harris said: "A recent study from the University of Cambridge has concluded that around 676,000 deaths occur in the UK every year due to inactivity. The Let's Get campaign is helping people of all ages and abilities to be more active in Dudley borough."

Pedometers are available from all borough libraries.

For more information on healthy eating and physical activity in Dudley visit www.lets-get.com

Extra cash for old buildings

MORE than £1 million is to be pumped into restoring historic buildings in Dudley.

The town is to be awarded Heritage Lottery funding to allow the second phase of the Dudley Historic Core Townscape Heritage Scheme to begin.

It is one of only 13 towns to be selected for funding.

Nearly £3m has been spent so far as part of the project to rejuvenate old buildings. Restoration work has been carried out on buildings including the old Co-Op in High Street, Baylies Hall in Tower Street and Old Crown Inn.

Homes on garage

A GARAGE used for spray painting will be demolished and replaced with six houses under plans. A house next door to the site in Pensnett High Street will also be knocked down. The plan for two-storey, one-bedroom homes have been submitted to Dudley Council.

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Shingles vaccine is urged for the elderly

OLDER residents are being urged to vaccinate themselves against shingles with a free vaccine.

The vaccine is being offered at GP surgeries throughout Dudley to residents aged 70, with a catch-up vaccination available for those aged 78 and 79.

Shingles is a painful skin rash caused by the reactivation of the same virus that causes chicken pox in children.While it can affect all age groups, it tends to affect people more as they get older, especially over the age of 70.

Councillor Rachel Harris, Dudley Council's cabinet member for health, said: "For most people, shingles can be a mild infection with good recovery, but for others it can be very painful and uncomfortable. The vaccine reduces the risk of getting the illness, but for those who do get it, their symptoms may be milder and the illness shorter than if they weren't protected.

"If you're 70, 78 or 79, and you haven't already been vaccinated, please get in touch with your GP surgery to make an appointment." Those aged 71 should have received the vaccine last year and those aged 72-77 will be offered the vaccine over the next few years.

Park and ride to stay open

THE park and ride facility will remain open while a new £1.9 million bus and rail station is built in the heart of Cradley Heath.

The Cradley Heath Interchange will open this spring. It is being paid for using cash from a £10m pot to improve public transport in and around Merry Hill shopping centre.

Building work is starting on new toilets with areas for families with children and disabled passengers.

Bosses aim to minimise disruption and are keeping the park and ride at Cradley Heath rail station open.

Banjo Dan's gig

A RENOWNED banjoist will bring his UK tour to the Black Country. Dan Walsh, who is preparing to release his latest album Incidents and Accidents, will play the Woodman Folk Club at Ashwood Marina in Kingswinford on March 16. To book, call 01384 560462.

Carer stole from elderly woman's purse

Sheryvone Brooks caught on camera

THIS is the moment a carer was caught on camera stealing cash from the elderly woman she cared for.

Sheryvone Brooks looks around as she reaches into a drawer and grabs a purse belonging to 85-year-old Evelyn Nicholson.

She was caught after a camera was installed at Mrs Nicholson's home, in Stourbridge, by Brooks' employers when concerns were raised by the pensioner's family.

Brooks, aged 19, of Sedgley, pleaded guilty to stealing £30, at Dudley Magistrates Court.

The images show Brooks, of Foxmeadow Close, Sedgley, in Mrs Nicholson's pocketing the cash and putting the purse back in the drawer.

Mrs Nicholson's son Robert Smith said his mother had not known the money had been taken and was extremely upset when she was told.

"When she found out it was devastating for her," he said.

"It has badly affected her health. Since this has happened she has been in hospital and been receiving respite care.

"Understandably it has shaken her. It was a massive betrayal of trust from someone who was supposed be caring for her."

Mr Smith said his mother had told him if Brooks had simply told her she was struggling for money she would have given it to her.

"That is the kind of person my mother is," he said.

Mr Smith said the family had been 'very angry' when they realised what had happened.

Brooks will be sentenced at Wolverhampton Crown Court next month.

Magistrates were told Brooks admitted what she had done and was remorseful.

Police patrols to target off-road bikes on estate

OFF-ROAD bikers causing a nuisance on a Dudley housing estate face a police crackdown.

Officers from the St James neighbourhood team will be patrolling Russells Hall estate in a bid to stamp out the bike menace.

The increased awareness follows complaints from residents fearing the problem will get worse with the lighter nights.

Officers are patrolling both in uniform and plain clothes in hotspots for off-road bikes.

Any person found riding one will face being prosecuted for driving offences and potentially having the bike seized and crushed.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, who represent St James's ward, said residents had been raising this issue at community forum meetings.

He said: "A lot of the grass is torn up and there is also a lot of noise and danger posed to anyone else on the street.

"I am pleased the police are taking this up and looking to clamp down on the problem.

"I think we have all been surprised by how early it has started this year. Normally it is not until the summer months that the problem is at its worst."

Councillor Mary Roberts, who also represents St James's ward, said the bikes had been an ongoing problem for years. She warned that the situation was worse during the spring and summer when better weather brought more off-roaders out and residents could hear them more because they had their windows open.

She said: "I do sympathise with the people of Russells Hall. It is a problem and the police have my full support."

Man, 21, is jailed after sex attacks

A MAN from Stourbridge who sexually exploited two vulnerable girls has been jailed for six years and eight months.

Former factory worker Saham Amin, of Balds Lane, Lye, was sentenced at Wolverhampton Crown Court after pleading guilty to raping a 14-year-old and sexually assaulting a 13-year-old.

The 21-year-old preyed on the 14-year-old for around a year before the attack. He also sexually assaulted a 13-year-old girl having plied the girls with vodka.

Amin initially denied the allegations but eventually admitted the offences in light of the medical evidence and the girls' testimonies against him.

He will also be placed upon the Sex Offender Register for life.

On September 24 last year Amin texted the elder girl and asked if she wanted to come round to his house for a 'drinking session'. Once the pair arrived, Amin, who had been drinking, sexually assaulted the younger girl before raping the older one.

Kai the fire dog is a Twitter sensation

West Midlands Fire Service dog Kai is seen out testing his skills at Baggeridge Country Park near Sedgley

HE is the daring dog who keeps thousands of people entertained on Twitter. But two-year-old Kai is not all about adorable pictures and messing about with his canine pals, Pep and Ellie.

The Belgian shepherd has a serious job to do — sniffing out the causes of fires across the West Midlands and attending some of the biggest blazes to rock the region.

As part of his on-going training he is often taken out to tackle the obstacles at Baggeridge Country Park near Sedgley.

Kai has been qualified with West Midlands Fire Service for a year and been to more than 40 scenes across the Black Country, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Warwickshire. This included the large blaze at Stag Industrial Estate in Bilston last November.

His role is to assess the possibility of an arson attack, or to completely rule out such a cause, having been trained to find signs of flammable liquid.

Kai is the responsibility of dog handler Mat Dixon, who is part of the West Midlands Fire Investigation Team, and came from a rescue centre in Telford.

Mat regularly shares Kai's adventures on Twitter, where more than 2,000 people follow him along with Pep, a German shorthaired pointer aged six and Labrador springer spaniel Ellie, now 13.

To follow their exploits follow @WMFireDogs on Twitter.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Man in court after a knife incident

A MAN accused of brandishing a knife in a town centre has appeared before magistrates.

Michael Webb, 36, of Kingsway, Wollaston, is charged with possessing an offensive weapon in Stourbridge High Street on February 18. He is also accused of affray and two counts of theft.

No pleas were taken during the short hearing at Dudley Magistrates Court last Friday in which Webb spoke only to confirm his name, age and address.

Webb will appear at Kidderminster Magistrates Court today (Thursday).

Fitness centre opens officially

BUDGET gym operator, Xercise4Less has officially opened its Brierley Hill site.

The 35,000 sq ft High Street gym has created 40 jobs.

It is the group's 24th site and has more than 400 pieces of the latest equipment.

Facilities include a women-only gym area and boxing ring.

The gym's current membership ranges from 16 to 83 and it offers corporate and personal packages.

Classic play being staged next month

THE Stourbridge Theatre Company will stage JB Priestley's classic play Time and the Conways next month.

Priestley's play revolves around a moneyed family from Yorkshire at different periods of their lives.

It will run at Stourbridge Town Hall theatre from March 19 to 21 at 7.30pm. Tickets are £9 and concessions £7, from The French Deli or call 0870 320 7000.

Pub bucks trend for conversions

A PUB is set open in Cradley Heath which reverses the trend of turning hostelries into shops.

The first pint is expected to be pulled at the Blackcountryman Pub, in High Street, in around five weeks. It is being created at the former Essentials store.

Drinkers will be able to buy real ales from £2.50.

Sadler's brews

A PUB is staging a festival devoted to beers from a Black Country brewery.

The Abraham Darby in the Merry Hill Centre is running the festival featuring Sadler's Ales brews from March 4 to 10.

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

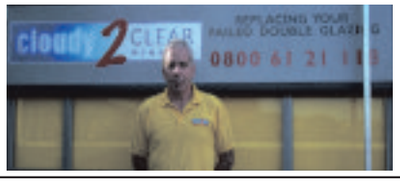
It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on **0800 61 21 118** and he'll be happy to help!



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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews

ALWAYS beware of anything which has the prefix 'smart'. Yes, I know many people love their 'smart' phones, but to a disinterested observer they appear to have done more to isolate young people from everyday social interaction than bring them together.

Then it was 'smart' gas meters, which simply mean that nobody needs to bother coming round to read them any more. Not to mention the 'smart' television, which appears to be not so much a source of entertainment as an Orwellian spying device, secretly recording its users relaxing in their own homes, transmitting details about the colour of their pyjamas and preferred bedtime beverages to the marketing men who then bombard them with junk mail.

And now we have 'smart' motorways. Please, spare us. On the way down to a very pleasant weekend away in Henley-on-Thames, I had the misfortune to travel down the West Midlands stretch of the M6, which having been transformed into a 'smart motorway' now resembles something more akin to a 10-mile long Checkpoint Charlie.

I've never seen so many cameras in all my life. A speed limit which variously fluctuated from 70, to 50, to 60mph, maybe even 40 on occasion, I lost track, coupled with a network of spy cameras which Kim Jong Un might consider 'a bit oppressive'.

Conditions

There was no apparent reason for the varying speed limits; the weather conditions were good and the traffic was light, but hey, if you've got these gadgets, you've got to use them, haven't you?

In the end, I became so paranoid about missing one of the never-ending gantry signs, I slowed down to 40 just in case. Better to cause a traffic jam than give the authoritarian blighters an excuse to fine you.

These new cameras are called Hadecs3 – didn't you just know they would have a stupid name which mixes up letters and numerals? – and, unlike the old cameras which relied on film, they can nick an infinite number of people. Which, given the confusing variation in speed limits, I don't doubt they will do just that.

Some motoring organisations have branded them stealth cameras, and called for them to be painted yellow. However, given the ludicrous number of them, they're pretty easy to spot, and painting them yellow is missing the point. In the past, speed cameras were justified on the grounds that they were located at accident blackspots.

However, a motorway where you drive slowly because the speed limit is confusing and the proliferation of cameras strikes a cold-war style fear into motorists does not strike me as very smart at all.

Also, if you can only drive at 40mph, it's not really a motorway at all. It is a road.

Flight Lieutenant John Benjamin Joseph Smith

DUDLEY PATRICK MULVANEY COPYRIGHT

John Smith looks the very epitome of an RAF pilot hero

Mystery surrounds pilot's last hours

Nearly 70 years on the family of war a tragic pilot is contacted by the Dutch village near his fatal crash

FROM their farm in rural southern Holland, young brothers Victor and Harry Slender stared as a flaming war plane plunged out of the sky.

In the cockpit on his first operational flight was 23-year-old pilot, Flight Lieutenant John Smith, who was from Hagley and went to school in Stourbridge.

Sadly the flight, which was shot down, would be his last.

He and his navigator Kenneth Goldthorpe died as the plane came down just yards from the young boys' home, in the final year of the Second World War.

Details surrounding his death were sketchy.

His family were aware he had died in a plane crash but little else was known.

But the crash which caused Smith's death had a lasting impact in the village of Norbeek close to the Belgian and German borders.

Seventy years on they were determined to remember the airmen who lost their lives on that fateful night and they were equally determined any relatives should also witness their service.

It was a complete surprise when Jenny Wilkins' phone rang last month as she sat in the same house her uncle John had lived seven decades earlier before going to war.

She was 14 months old when his Mosquito plane crashed.

"We were just sitting here at home as normal," the 71-year-old retired teacher said.

On the other end of the line was a Dutch woman based in England who was trying to track down family members for the villagers. "She was married to someone in the RAF and happened to be from the village where the plane came down," she said. "She put me in contact with the organiser of the event."

Flight Lieutenant John Smith's niece, Jenny Watkins, of Hagley, attended the service

Four weeks later Mrs Wilkins, who taught at the Redhill School in Stourbridge, went to the Netherlands with her sister Judith and husband Paul to a memorial service honouring her maternal uncle.

Mr Smith grew up in Hagley and was educated at the King Edward Grammar School, when he was old enough he volunteered to join the military. He trained pilots in America and Canada prior to the mission.

Mrs Wilkins said: "We knew that he had been killed and we knew the date but the family never really talked about it much, I think my grandparents were very unforgiving that he had gone out there.

"All we knew is that he was shot down but we didn't know where."

So it came as a shock when she was informed a memorial service was being held to remember her uncle – and that people from another country knew more than her own family about how Smith came to meet his demise.

She said: "The whole village turned out, youngster, the elderly, two sergeants from the RAF and the mayor.

"We were just thrilled. We didn't expect anything like that. They had thought about him and did something to say this is where it happened.

"They were so interested in the family, everybody came up and asked and said 'sorry about your uncle' but it was a happy occasion.

"The ceremony was lovely, they took care of us.

"It was hurriedly arranged by local people and they were so welcoming. They are so grateful he avoided the village."

A breakfast buffet was arranged for their guests from across the North Sea and the family attended a Mass where the local priests praised the airmen in Dutch and English. At the crash site lies a stone memorial with a plaque marking the spot where the two men died.

A pear tree was planted following the crash has become part of an orchard.

The Slender brothers, Victor, now77 and Harry 82, were at the spot where the plane had crashed 70 years earlier.

Mrs Wilkins said: "Victor hadn't spoken English for 64 years but he was able to recount what happened after all these years."

He remembered their family being the first ones to approach the wreckage.

American soldiers stationed there, soon arrived and removed the bodies.

Though the family now know how Smith died, there remains an air of mystery.

Records show he took off from RAF Great Massingham in Norfolk at around 10pm and crashed in the Netherlands six hours later.

Mrs Wilkins said: "What happened after he left England, because the fuel on board wouldn't have lasted for that journey?"

WEEK IN POLITICS

with Daniel Wainwright

I THINK we can safely say the Tories have definitely not given up on the West Midlands.

The key marginal seat of Cannock Chase was one that got briefly flagged up on the Conservative website as 'non-target'. But you certainly don't deploy your most powerful weapon at somewhere that isn't a target.

Labour might have weaponised the NHS, but the Tories have weaponised Boris Johnson. The blond bombshell exploded in the Premier Suite in a sea of selfies, speeches and pancake tossing.

Hot on the heels of visits from the Chancellor, it's obvious that the party wants to hold the constituency where it was gifted its biggest swing from Labour in 2010.

Of course Labour were no slouches when it came to visiting marginal seats.

Wolverhampton North East, where shadow housing minister Emma Reynolds is MP, has a smaller Labour majority than the Tory one in Cannock.

But it should, in theory, be easier to hold on to. After all, if the Tories could not take it from Labour in 2010 when they were the fresh faces of opposition, the task is doubly difficult after five years in power.

So having not one but four shadow cabinet ministers decamp to Wolverhampton and the Jaguar Land Rover engine plant would have done a lot for Miss Reynolds. She spoke during the party's launch of its economic plan on the factory floor of how the time JLR announced it was coming to the city was her proudest day as an MP.

That was a bit rich for South Staffordshire Conservative MP Gavin Williamson. After all, the factory is actually in his constituency.

That's not the only territorial issue either. The Conservatives want everyone to know it was under the Coalition that JLR came to the i54 and transformed what was predominantly an empty field into one of the biggest pieces of private sector investment in Wolverhampton/South Staffordshire for a generation. In particular, he says the site never even had electricity and gas in all the years under Labour that it lay vacant.

Miss Reynolds, however, reminds everyone it was the work of Advantage West Midlands, the old regional development agency, that turned a polluted patch of land by the motorway into prime development space.

AWM was scrapped by the Coalition. And while Labour isn't happy about that, it won't be bringing it back if it wins the election.

There is however, another group that deserves a lot more credit than any politicians. And that's Jaguar Land Rover itself for having survived the recession and come out of it stronger than ever and willing to actually invest here at all.

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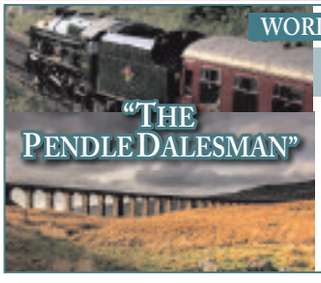

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COMPASS BY WEST COAST

Humps are 'obscene' waste of cash

ARE speed humps the most obscene waste of council cash?

With the disgraceful state of our roads and pot holes knocking our cars tyres and suspensions about why are councils wasting money by constantly repairing the speed humps along Common Road, Wombourne?

Should it be considered that as the humps are constantly being damaged by cars bumping over them, is any equal damage also being done to the cars as well as the humps? The question needs to be asked why do the Common Road humps need so much repair?

In my opinion the humps are still too high and should be removed — not repaired. When I originally opposed the Common Road humps they were sold to the public as 'speed cushions' not humps. Larger vehicles and 4x4s don't even have to slow down for speed cushions/humps as they are wide enough to pass over cushions/humps without touching them.

There are better and cheaper ways of controlling vehicle speeds that don't cause the misery of such humps and don't burden the taxpayer the cost of endless repairs.

About 100 years ago the rubber pneumatic tyre was invented to improve the ride quality of cars. If the council must still have speed humps, they should start to replace the hard tarmac humps with the softer rubber humps that may save on repairs and damage to cars. Also if councils must put large obstacles in the middle of roads, why not make them the bright yellow colour that is normal used as a warning colour for maintenance vehicles, etc?

G E FANTHOM
Swindon Village

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

E-MAIL
Dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Climate is left too late

MY wife used to work for a trade association and for many years she was dealing with a scheme regarding 'climate change'.

The object of this was to make industry aware of the problems facing the world due to the discharge of undesirable elements into the atmosphere. This scheme was run fully with co-operation of the Department of the Environment.

She has been retired now for 11 years and only now have the Government clowns woken up. Cameron, Clegg and Miliband are saying that 'we must do something'.

Having said that, if the rest of the world do not play ball, the problem will not be alleviated.

P COLE
Kingswinford

Plaza sad loss

LET us hope Dudley Hippodrome can be rescued. What a tremendous pity that next door's magnificent Plaza cinema was demolished.

RT SLIM
Halesowen

Hypocritical defence for hunting foxes

IN response to B Smithe's letter regarding the reintroduction of fox hunting, I can appreciate how he/she would feel that it would be a good thing. There cannot be a much more distressing experience for a child than to find their pets have been killed. The description of a fox on a child's pram was almost enough to change my own point of view.

That was until I remembered that hunting is a singularly ineffective way of controlling the fox population. I would hazard a guess that more foxes are killed in a single night on roads across the UK than killed in a season's hunting.

This was a sport which needed a fox population, presumably this is why it took place during the winter. That gave foxes time to give birth and raise their cubs. It is only because we are not comfortable these days with the idea of pleasure from seeing an animal ripped limb from limb that it has to be dressed up as the control of vermin. In fact, disturbing foxes in their natural environment is more likely to drive them into urban areas. If fox hunting is re-introduced let it at least be for creating jobs in rural areas, or simply because dashing about the country side on horseback is great fun, because to argue that it makes any meaningful impression on the fox population is hypocritical nonsense.

S CLARKE
Stourbridge

Rich dodge tax as the poor suffer

IT is hard to believe that this Coalition Government haven't pursued the multi-millionaires who have not paid the tax that they should have.

It was reported that there were 7,000 who have not paid their full share of tax, the HM Revenue & Customs has only looked into 1,000 cases out of 7,000 and only prosecuted one person.

If all these people had been pursued the total amount of tax collected would have resulted in £34 billion. This would have gone a long way to have solved our debt problem and would have eliminated most of the austerity cuts that this coalition have put on the less well off and the disabled in this country.

We shouldn't be surprised should we. Some of these people fund the Conservative Party. Ed Miliband has promised a review on the HMRC if Labour get into power.

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Ray and Lin Gilbert from the Black Country Echoes Festival at Wolverhampton Art Gallery

John Bulmer's iconic Tipton at Dawn, which was displayed

The old Blue Bird toffee factory in Halesowen in the 1960s, highlighted in the festival

A Mander's artefact discovered as part of the festival

John Meadows with his 1958 FriskySport at the event launch

Visitor numbers hit magic million to see echoes of Black Country life

WITH events at 25 venues staged by 250 volunteers, it was billed as one of the most ambitious history projects the Black Country had ever seen.

And now organisers have revealed more than one million visitors flocked to the Echoes Festival since it was launched in September last year.

Art exhibitions, reunions, history fairs and drama performances were among the events held throughout the region.

Of the one million visitors, at least 12 per cent were from outside the Black Country – which bosses say has boosted tourism. And around 30 per cent were first-time visitors to the venues. Festival co-ordinator Deb Slade said: "We certainly pulled a lot of exhibitions and events together, 27 exhibitions and 87 events in all, and supported over 25 venues to theme their programming."

A focus of the festival was the area's rich

MEMORY LANE

Report by Adam Burling

manufacturing heritage, with some 1,560 workers gathering at 100 workshops to share their memories.

Anecdotes were documented by the team of trained volunteers, and will be posted in an online archive being created. Mrs Slade said photographs, stories and audio recordings will be gathered on the website to ensure the festival has a lasting legacy.

Among the highlights was the Making of Mordor event at Wolverhampton Art Gallery, which explored how JRR Tolkien's image of Mordor was influenced by the region's industrial landscape.

Volunteer Roy Gilbert, a 63-year-old retired teacher, helped create the display using more than 1,000 saplings. Mr Gilbert and his wife Linda spent nearly 100 hours working on the festival between them, running a stand at the Himley Hall Vehicle Show, researching the Joseph Dixon saddlery firm in Walsall and interviewing former workers. Organisers say a total of 25,000 volunteering hours were spent on the festival, which would have cost more than £300,000 if they were being paid.

Mr Gilbert said: "It has been a real success and everyone I have spoken to has taken a lot from it. It has taught me things about the Black Country that I had no idea about and I'm so glad I was a part of it."

Two of the smaller venues' exhibitions were extended as they proved so popular.

Unseen

In The Leather at Walsall Leather Museum featured images of the current state of the old leatherworks buildings in the borough, while also capturing the people who worked there through previously unseen photographs. Black Country Echoes: In Pictures at The Light House attracted people of all ages with its images of residents, landscape and industry from the 1960s to 90s.

Classic vehicles drew crowds at nine events with Bean cars, Turner, Doretti, Guy Motors, Jensen, Sunbeam and Villiers among the manufacturers on display.

Aldridge Airport celebrated the 1950s with a display of historic vehicles attended by 400 people, while 700 fans of the 1960s got an insight into the mod culture at Wednesbury Museum.

Some striking 1970s leather fashion was on display at Walsall Leather Museum, with jackets, skirts and dresses by Walsall-based 4 U Fashion, which was started by Arthur Fox and his wife Joan.

Factories that were once renowned by people across the country were also remembered, with the Blue Bird toffee factory in Halesowen the source of many stories.

And hundreds of artefacts came to light in recent months, each giving a glimpse into the industrial and cultural history of the Black Country. Items previously belonging to the Mander family were uncovered, including sports trophies and shields – and they will be kept by the museum to be displayed in future exhibitions.

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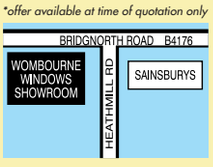

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Wolves create a wave of support for school's art

Wolverhampton Wanderers mascot Wolfie is pictured with Wolves Aid Trustee Ian Millard and Kian Westwood, 11

AN ARTWORK unveiled at a Brierley Hill school is helping children with severe learning difficulties learn about colours and shapes.

The mural at Old Park School has been funded by a £3,000 grant from Wolves Aid, part of the Wolves Community Trust.

Staff, pupils and officials from the trust gathered to see the mural unveiled in a ceremony held at the school, in Thorns Road.

The mural depicts a beach scene with a large wave. It is made from a range of tactile materials. The mural has been installed on a wall near to the school's swimming pool.

It also has a distinctive old gold and black football highlighting the link with the Molineux club.

School headteacher Gill Cartwright said: "We are very grateful to the Wolves Trust for supporting our tactile panel. This will benefit all of our pupils. Many have visual impairments, so this will be of enormous use to them."

Wolves Aid spokesman Laura Cowley said: "Originally we were contacted and asked if we could provide a signed football or memorabilia which could raise funds for the mural. However, when we learned more about the project it became clear there was more we could do."

The unveiling ceremony was attended by trustee Ian Millard and Wolves mascot Wolfie.

Wolves Aid supports organisations and charities focused on children, families, the disadvantaged and those with disabilities.

Groups which would like to apply are asked to call Laura Cowley on 01902 828366.

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This popular show is attended by more than 30,000 creative craft enthusiasts over the three show days. With more than 300 exhibitors, a host of experts and inspiring catwalk shows, this event is not to be missed.

And the organisers have teamed up with the Chronicle series to give 70 lucky readers the chance to win a pair of tickets.

The International Craft and Hobby Fair is thrilled to be able to offer three shows for the price of one at the NEC.

With many fascinating stands, talks, demonstrations and features, they are a haven for anyone with a passion for all things craft.

For those who truly enjoy sewing for pleasure, the aptly-named show should be the first port of call. It offers the latest supplies, ideas and innovations. Visitors can find kits, patterns, fabrics, threads and hands-on activities.

Knitters from across the UK saw their hard work and efforts unveiled in 2014, when the world record was set for the longest-knitted chain which measured a staggering one kilometre long.

The Sewing Club, now a regular feature at the show will see author and sewing expert Laura Strutt running mini workshops for beginners.

Fashion Embroidery & Stitch is the ultimate showcase for anyone with a love of stitch and the textile arts and the daily catwalk fashion shows will showcase a range of exciting creations.

Hobbycraft lovers can enjoy a variety of demonstrations and workshops including the lively on-stand demos.

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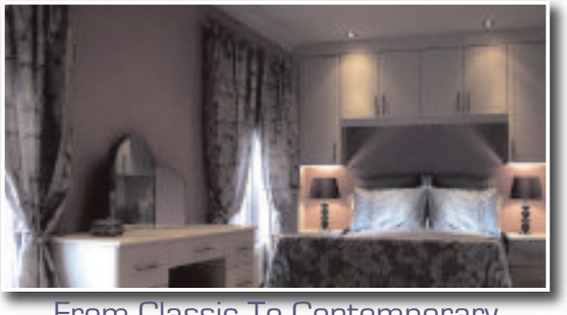

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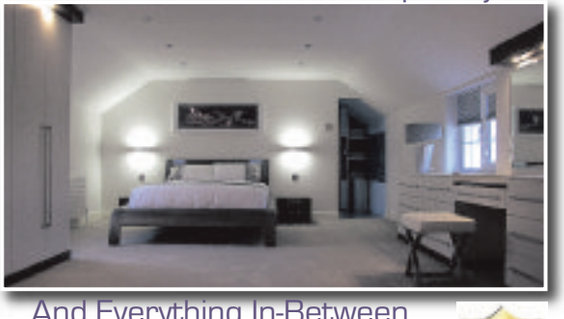

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Community join pupils in Guide Dog walkathon

MORE than £1,600 has been raised to help support a guide dog as fundraisers put their best foot forward for charity.

Dozens of pupils, staff and other members of the community joined a sponsored walkathon at The Brier School, Kingswinford.

The event was organised as part of school project where the pupils learned about guide dogs and how they help their owners.

The school raised money towards funding the training costs for a new guide dog to be homed with someone in need in the Black Country.

Students were congratulated for their efforts by teachers who said it was their enthusiasm made the fundraising project a success.

The school's 150 pupils brought in money ahead of the walkathon. Among them was five-year-old pupil Jayden Pinches who raised £500 for the charity.

Contributed

Guide Dogs joined pupils for the walking event held at the school in Bromley Lane.

Pupils were sponsored for a variety of distances and all contributed to fundraising efforts. Staff from the nearby Co-Operative store also helped by donating £85. Volunteers from the HM Revenue & Customs, which regularly holds activities to help students, also attended on the day and several parents also took part to make the day a resounding success.

Head teacher Russell Hinton said: "I'm really, really proud of the children. They have done so well and we have been totally surprised by how much they have raised.

"All of the pupils, parents and relatives have helped raise money, which has been great. It has been a real positive community event."

Guide dog users joins pupils and staff at The Brier School in Kingswinford where dozens of pupils, staff and other members of the community joined a sponsored walkathon, raising more than £1,600 for a new guide dog

Pub supporters plan campaign

CAMPAIGNERS have vowed to fight any move to build a Co-op store in the car park of a pub in Kingswinford.

The proposals for land behind The Old Court House Hotel have been mooted by New River Retail and Marstons Brewery. There has been no planning application submitted yet.

The pub's landlady, Coral Smith, has been joined by Councillor Dave Tyler and Natasha Millward, Labour's parliamentary candidate for Dudley South, to launch a campaign to protect the future of the pub.

Ms Smith said: "We've built The Old Court House from the ground up in five years, bringing back regulars by serving up Sunday meals and providing a friendly atmosphere for families. This proposal will only bring costly chaos to our front door. Car parking space will be halved."

A New River Retail spokesman said he could not comment at this stage.

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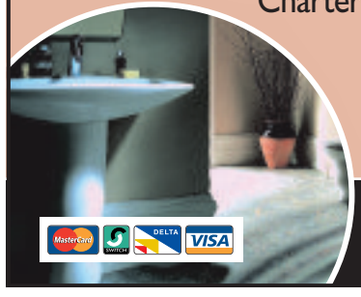

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Council tax will rise in Worcestershire

COUNCIL tax will rise for residents in Worcestershire under proposals which will see cuts of almost £24 million. People living in Hagley and Clent are among those who will see council tax bills rise by 1.94 per cent after proposals were backed by Worcestershire County Council. The increase will see yearly bills for an average Band D property rise by around £20 to £1,079.

But county council leaders said there would be increased spending on children's care, highways and footways as a result. Councillors also agreed to freeze their allowances for the seventh year running.

Council leader Adrian Hardman said: "This is a budget that faces up to the challenges that the council faces, not only in the medium term but also in the next year. It's also a budget which recognises the fact that the Revenue Support Grant will be falling by some £19m, while addressing the pressures in looking after children's services."

He added that it was a "prudent budget" that improved the infrastructure of the county and defended the most vulnerable.

Mr Showbiz — illusionist Vic Odin (real name Foster) and his wife and assistant Louise in the 1990s

Memories of the Black Country's daring showman

HIS death defying stunts wowed thousands — earning him the reputation of being the Black Country's own Harry Houdini.

Tributes have been paid to magician and illusionist Vic Odin, from Stourbridge, who has died at the age of 76. The entertainer's daredevil act involved being suspended by a rope and escaping from a straitjacket while dangling upside down.

The daring trick helped launch his career travelling the world as an escapologist with the help of his stage assistant and wife Louise. Thousands gasped as Vic brushed with death before their eyes, freeing himself from cuffs and straitjackets.

Friend Ray Hingley, who helped establish the Black Country Night Out, described Mr Odin as a wonderful performer.

"He was like the Black Country's Harry Houdini," said Mr Hingley. "He could really hold a crowd. He was always a true professional and a great performer."

Mr Hingley first met the magician in 1968 when he walked into his pub the Robin Hood at Brierley Hill, which was cleared for Merry Hill shopping centre car parks

The pair got chatting as Mr Hingley ran the Citizens Theatre at his pub. It was the start of a long friendshi, which would see Mr Odin often perform at the pub's theatre. Later Mr Odin appeared on Opportunity Knocks, the TV talent show.

The 76-year-old died at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley on February 8 after suffering a heart attack. He also had lung cancer. His wife for 60 years, Louise, died in 2007.

MP gives backing to group of High Flyers

AN MP has thrown his support behind a South Staffordshire community group who fear they could be made homeless.

High Flyers has helped many young people with learning difficulties since being launched in Wombourne seven years ago.

It was originally based in a local church hall but moved to its current address at Pegasus House in Elder Grove in 2010 where it has half the premises. The remainder of the building is used by its owner, the Sandwell charity Options For Life. High Flyers has three years remaining of their five year licence on the property but have launched a hunt for alternative accommodation amid growing anxiety that the licence will not be renewed.

They have offered to buy the property but have been told by Options For Life that it is too early to discuss their plans for what happens on the expiry of the current agreement.

This has caused 'considerable concern' among staff and the 40 men and women aged between 18 and 43 currently attending.

The community group has a dozen full and part time staff as well as eight volunteers who help their members with everything from horse riding to computers as well as life skills and education.

South Staffordshire MP Gavin Williamson said: "High Flyers have helped a huge number of people in Wombourne and the surrounding area. It is a great group that plays a huge part in the community.

By John Scott

"I will continue to support them in their challenge to secure premises for this wonderful group which supports so many of those living in the area with learning difficulties."

High Flyers boss Sheila Baker said: "We are grateful for the support we are receiving from Mr Williamson and our local councillors, especially since at this time it would be so easy for them to concentrate their focus on the forthcoming General Election.

"We owe it to our members, who are vulnerable, their families who trust us and the local community who have supported us to do everything we can to ensure we are not forced out of existence. I believe that with hard work, some answers to prayer, and our brilliant community behind us, we can sort this out to everybody's satisfaction."

Among local organisations to support High Flyers is Wombourne Funeral Services who donated £3,000 of the money raised for charity by its partners and staff.

Funding is helping to buy cricket nets

A CRICKET club will be able to buy new equipment after receiving funding of more than £27,000. Belbroughton Cricket Club, near Stourbridge, will now have new nets in place by April.

The money was provided by the Cory Environmental Trust in Britain (CETB), which provides funding to projects that benefit local communities.

Tony Boardman, vice-chairman of the club, said: "Our current nets are dated and in an extremely poor state of repair. The new nets will provide us with the state-of-the-art facilities needed to attract more local people into cricket. We'd like to thank CETB for helping us hit our fundraising target."

The new nets will be used by club members as well as schools and groups.

Angela Haymonds, CETB secretary, said: "The CETB trustees are pleased to be able to contribute to this project."

Village's new fire station open day

FIREFIGHTERS are inviting villagers to look around their new £1.9 million fire station.

The crew in Kinver will be showcasing the facilities which are available for local groups to use as well as giving a tour of the operational side of the station.

The community open day will take place from 1pm-3.30pm and then from 4pm-6pm today (Thursday).

A milestone will also be marked at 1pm when a time capsule is buried in the community fire station's grounds. Chief Fire Officer Peter Dartford will be attending the ceremony, along with local councillors.

The time capsule will contain a photograph and short biography of each of the current crew members as well as pictures of the old fire station.

Boards to tell of town's links with historic Titanic anchor

THE history of the anchor for the ill-fated ocean liner Titantic, which was forged in Netherton, is to be showcased under plans for new display boards in the town.

Dudley Council wants to place two information panels at open space near to the 16-ton anchor replica in The Market Place.

Officials said the first panel will detail the history of the original anchor commissioned for the ill-fated ocean liner in 1911 and forged by Netherton firm N. Hingley & Son.

The second will detail the story of the replica, which was created for a Channel 4 documentary looking into the history of the ship's construction.

Both panels will be placed on two identical sculptures modelled on an anchor windlass, the device used on a ship to wind in the cable and anchor itself. The scheme was being discussed at a meeting of Dudley Council's development control committee this week.

Planning officers have recommended the plans be approved saying the information panels will 'enhance the appearance' of the replica anchor and provide both residents and visitors with information on an important part of the town's heritage.

Officials said notification had been set out to 60 properties near to the anchor and no objections had been received.

The replica Titanic anchor

Support for grandparents

A FREE support group has been set up to help grandparents who may have lost contact with their grandchildren following a family split.

Grandparents are often the forgotten victims of divorce and separation. The Grandparent's Association has set up a new support group and the first meeting will take place at Kingswinford Community Centre from 10.30am to 12.30pm today (Thursday).

The group will be run by Hannah Nicholls, a family lawyer working as a volunteer for the association

For more information call her on 01384 327162 or The Grandparents' Association on 01279 428 040.

Entertainers pay tribute to Tommy

Alan 'Aynuk' Smith joined the tribute to Tommy Mundon

IT may have been bittersweet but there were still plenty of hearty loffs as more than 700 fans paid their respects to Black Country comedy legend Tommy Mundon at a concert held in his honour.

People packed into the Halesowen comic's favourite venue, Brierley Hill Civic Hall, for the event organised by the late comic's friends in the show business community.

Alongside paying tribute to Tommy, who died last year aged 80, the sell-out concert also raised funds for Stourbridge's Mary Stevens Hospice, which helped care for the comedian during his long battle with Parkinson's Disease.

It is expected to raise in excess of £10,000 for the hospice.

Among the acts who took to the stage were Alan 'Aynuk' Smith, Barry Smith, Marlene, Maggie O'Hara, Doug Parker and Mel Thomas. They had all shared the stage with Tommy in the past. Members of Tommy's family, including his widow Val, also attended the event.

Compère Mr Thomas got the show started with a tribute to the comic and during the concert told some of Tommy's best known gags.

MP praises police campaign on slavery

STOURBRIDGE MP Margot James has congratulated police on their campaign to train officers better to tackle modern slavery.

The Conservative MP spoke in Parliament, calling on Home Office minister Karen Bradley MP to recognise Operation Sentinel, a campaign recently launched by West Midlands police.

Operation Sentinel is an initiative that seeks to raise awareness and tackle a range of vulnerability issues such as child sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, honour case violence and modern slavery.

This year, the force will be training over 1,100 front line officers to identify potential victims of modern slavery, safeguard them and raise public awareness of the issue.

Miss James said: "West Midlands Police have come up with an excellent initiative which will help safeguard vulnerable individuals from these awful crimes."

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Police air service to shut its base at Halfpenny Green

By Peter Madeley

THE National Police Air Service (NPAS) which provides air support to forces throughout the UK is to close its base at Halfpenny Green Airport.

The airport, near Stourbridge, will cease NPAS operations after Government funding cuts prompted changes to the service.

Halfpenny Green, near Bobbington, is one of 10 of 25 bases set to close nationally over the next two years.

It means the nearest police helicopters will be based in Birmingham as of January 2016.

Under the new system, there will be 15 bases in England and Wales, all controlled from headquarters in West Yorkshire.

NPAS bosses say the move will help the service make 'substantial financial savings' while improving 'efficiency and effectiveness'. The service has already made savings of £11 million in the last year.

West Midlands Police, West Mercia Police and Staffordshire Police will continue to share the service from Birmingham following the closure of the base at the airport known officially as Wolverhampton Halfpenny Green.

The accountable manager for NPAS, Chief Superintendent Ian Whitehouse, said: "NPAS needs to find further substantial financial savings with a target of 14 per cent of revenue cuts over the next three years. This is on top of the 23 per cent savings already made.

"Local police forces facing similar savings are looking at how they rationalise their estate and ways of operating and NPAS is no different in this regard.

"There is no easy way of doing this and difficult decisions have to be made. The National Police Air Service Strategic Board therefore decided to move to the 15-base model. This move will help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service and mean that every base supports police forces 24 hours a day. It is a move based on an analysis of potential threat, risk and harm to the public we serve."

Mr Whitehouse added that there will be no reduction in the number of aircraft, although it will see four fixed-wing aircraft form part of the 23-aircraft fleet. The fixed-wing aircraft, which will be based at East Midlands Airport, are cheaper to fly than helicopters.

E-cigs ban for those looking to adopt under-5s

COUNCILS in the Black Country will not allow people to adopt children if they are using e-cigarettes, even after quitting smoking actual cigarettes.

Despite experts saying 'vaping' poses little or no threat to children in the home, authorities are refusing to place under-fives with users.

In Dudley, Wolverhampton Sandwell and Walsall, people who wish to adopt a pre-school age child have to have given up any kind of smoking for at least six months.

But it comes at a time when demand for care services is soaring and councils are being forced to cut services in order to afford to look after vulnerable youngsters.

On the website Adoption in the Black Country, funded by the four borough councils, a section on smoking reads: "We have a duty to consider the effects of smoking on children in their care and will not usually place preschool children (around five or under) or those with a heart or chest/respiratory complaint such as asthma, with people who smoke or use electronic substitutes.

"Where prospective adopters wish to adopt children from the aforementioned groups, we ask that prospective adopters have given up smoking and have not smoked for a period of six month or longer."

New Black Country crime novel is a hit

Author Angela Marsons from Brierley Hill with her crime novel, about a gruesome Black Country murder

AN AUTHOR from the Black Country has seen her debut crime novel shoot to number four in pre-order book charts.

Angela Marsons, of Brierley Hill, has written Silent Scream about the gruesome murder of a Black Country headmistress that puts her detective Kim Stone on the trail of a serial killer with a history of slayings that span decades.

A former security manager at Merry Hill shopping centre, Miss Marsons described her female police officer character as brash and rude,but also caring and vulnerable.

"I just thought the setting of the Black Country was perfect for the personality of the lead character. I am proud of this area and its industrial past," said the 47-year-old former Heathfield High School pupil. "It was just so totally unexpected where the book has got in the charts. I just never ever expected this kind of response," she added.

Her book is being published by Bookouture and is available via Amazon.

Town's running club for women seeks beginners

A NEW 10-week beginners running course designed for women is starting in the Black Country on April 21.

The latest course from Dudley Ladies Running Club is intended to encourage more local women, of all ages and backgrounds, to get fit by taking up running.

The club was originally started in 2002 and today the youngest member is aged 18 and the oldest is well over 65.

The members come "in all shapes and sizes", according to the club's website, including housewives, career women and students.

At its peak in the summer, the club has around 200 members, and new recruits are joining the club all the time.

The group will meet to train each Tuesday and Thursday evenings at Wombourne Leisure Centre, in Ounsdale Road, Wombourne, from 7.30pm.

The new members will be taught about running safely and the right clothes to wear and footwear.

The course aims to get the beginners running a minimum of three miles. Some have even gone on to run the London Marathon.

Further information is available from Rita Vanes on (01384) 832168 or from the club's website at www.dudleyladies.co.uk

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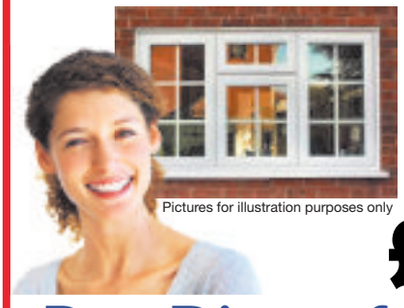
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Welsh songbird in Symphony double

ONE of the world's most popular classical-pop crossover artists, Welsh mezzo-soprano Katherine Jenkins, is in concert at Birmingham Symphony Hall next weekend with concerts on March 7 and 8.

The Neath-born songbird is only 34 but last autumn released her tenth studio album, Home Sweet Home, a mix of operatic arias with hymns, show tunes and pop songs.

It's been a remarkable 11-year career for the former choir girl, tour guide and model who received an OBE in 2014 for her charity work.

She has sung in front of thousands at top international rugby and cricket matches, at the Cardiff City versus Portsmouth FA Cup Final, the VE Day anniversary concert, and for Her Majesty the Queen at the 79th Royal Variety performance.

Poppy

Most memorably she helped launch the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal in 2005 wearing a dress made from 2,500 poppies.

Her personal achievements include sharing a catwalk with Naomi Campbell, running the London Marathon (five hours and 26 minutes to run 26.2 miles in memory of her father) and coming second on Dancing with the Stars, the American version of Strictly Come Dancing.

Tickets for her Birmingham concerts range in price from £29.50 to £135 plus fees.

Fairport's Pegg is happy to get back to Brummie roots

By Danny Farragher

FOR most people having a sore throat which makes talking feel like chewing shards of glass would stop an interview in its tracks.

Thankfully, Dave Pegg – now the lynch pin of the seminal folk rock band Fairport Convention, is a talker and, apology out of the way, he immediately enthuses about his home town gig on Friday.

"It's going to be great coming back to Birmingham Town Hall, it's my favourite gig 'coz I'm a Brummie and so is Ric Sanders, so for us it's like going home."

Pegg was born and bred in Acocks Green and Sanders brought up in the Second City.

"We were there last year but I couldn't play because I cut a tendon in my finger. I'm playing again this year. It's almost completely recovered."

In two years time Fairport will be 50 and by then Pegg will have been with them for all but the first two - Simon Nichol is the only founding member left.

The current line up of Pegg, Sanders, Nichol, Chris Leslie and Gerry Conway, is the longest the band has had at 18 years and is in the middle of their winter tour promoting their first new studio album for four years, Myths and Heroes.

"I think the album is the best one we have made with this line-up.

"Myths & Heroes is not quite a new direction for the band, but it's certainly a more complete view of where the band is at musically, in terms of influences and there's lots of new stuff on it.

"Chris, our multi-instrumentalist, has written most of the material and we've also got songs from our friends Ralph McTell and Anna Ryder, who's from Warwick."

"It's really worked out well, there aren't any so-called filler tracks on it; we don't rush to make albums and we will only put stuff out when we've got what we consider to be really good songs."

Does that explain the four year gap between this and the last studio album?

"Yes," says Pegg with a wry laugh.

Fairport, from left. Simon Nichol, Gerry Conway, Chris Leslie, Dave Pegg and Ric Sanders

How does Pegg explain Fairport surviving this long?

"We packed up in '79 because we thought we were too old. It was when the music business started being run by accountants; it was also the punk era.

"It was a bad idea, we were in our early 30s," he laughs loudly.

"Then we started getting back together because of the Cropredy Festival."

"We still love treading the boards. We all still love doing what we do and we hope we have kept our audience by being OK at it."

Fairport Convention are at the Town Hall, Birmingham Friday February 27. Show starts 7.30pm. Tickets are £24 plus usual booking fee.

Nice and sleazy in 50s Soho

A MAD World My Masters, Jacobean playwright Thomas Middleton's satire on a society obsessed by sex and money, is updated 350 years to 1950s seedy Soho, in a Royal Shakespeare Company touring production that gets a short run at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

Staged from tonight (Thursday) until Saturday, this co-production with English Touring Theatre, was one of the hits of the season at Stratford in 2013. It is directed by Sean Foley, who had West End success with The Ladykillers, which came to the Grand on tour.

A rude and rumbustious farce with live jazz music, the adapted 'city comedy' pokes fun at the haves and have-nots as a greedy young man aims to get his hands on his uncle's fortune — even prepared to disguise himself as a hooker to do so.

Sarah Ridgeway as Truly Kidman in A Mad World My Masters

Adam Ant is to wear Dirk's old sox

BEFORE he became a dandy highwayman, Adam Ant was at the forefront of the London post-punk music scene, as exemplified by his debut album Dirk Wears White Sox.

Ant become one of the biggest pop stars of the 1980s but his musical career began in 1975 when, as Stuart Goddard, his art school band Bazooka Joe were supported by a new group called the Sex Pistols. Goddard quit his band, renamed himself Adam Ant, went down the Roxy in London's Covent Garden, where he met his future Ants at a Siouxsie and the Banshees gig.

Charming

This led to the dark imagery of the debut in 1979. Then Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren persuaded the Ants to jump ship to become Bow Wow Wow and Adam reinvented himself as Prince Charming.

Adam Ant will revisit that debut album, plus the hits, at The Slade Rooms in Wolverhampton on April 16. Tickets cost £26.95.

It's a Dara date or catch Herring

IT is a big comedy night in Wolverhampton tomorrow (Friday) when Dara O'Briain plays a sold-out Wolverhampton Civic Hall and Richard Herring brings his Lord of the Dance Settee show to the Slade Rooms.

Hit farce One Man Two Guvnors, with ex-East-Ender Shaun Williamson, opens at the Grand in Wolverhampton on March 17.

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CHOICE

Will.i.am

The Voice UK (BBC1, 7.15pm)
The blind auditions are complete and the coaches have chosen 12 acts each. Now begins the process of whittling them down by half for the live shows – and that means the return of the battle rounds. Emma Willis and Marvin Humes host as the coaches pair up their acts to perform against each other in head-to-head musical performances. It's then up to Will.i.am, Tom Jones, Rita Ora and Ricky Wilson to decide who to keep and who to eliminate. However, it's not necessarily over for the losers as the coaches have a chance to 'steal' a rejected artist for their own team, giving them a total of seven acts to take into the knockout rounds.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Mary Berry Cooks. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Scotland v Italy (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. France v Wales (Kick-off 5.00pm).

6.55 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

7.15 The Voice UK. The start of the battle rounds, in which the acts perform in head-to-head sing-offs, leaving the coaches to decide who to take through to the knockouts.

9.15 Casualty. Dixie convinces former drug addict Dave not to give up on himself, or his relationship with his father and son. Connie finds a friend in Alfred, a patient suffering from motor neurone disease who used to be a surgeon, and discovers he is finding life unbearable. Zoe and Max continue their secret fling, but the porter decides he wants everything out in the open. Will a declaration of love do the trick?

10.05 The National Lottery Live. Gaby Roslin presents the Lotto and Thunderball draws, joined by pop star Ella Henderson, who performs her new single Mirror Man and pushes the button.

10.15 BBC News; Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents action from the latest Premier League matches, including Manchester United v Sunderland at Old Trafford and West Ham United v Crystal Palace at Upton Park. United needed three points to boost their chances of a top-four finish, while the Hammers were aiming to do the double over the Eagles. Plus, highlights of Burnley v Swansea City, Newcastle United v Aston Villa, Stoke City v Hull City and West Bromwich Albion v Southampton; National Lottery Update.

11.55 The Football League Show. Manish Bhasin presents highlights and all the goals from the latest fixtures in the Championship, League One and League Two, including Sheffield Wednesday v Middlesbrough.

1.15 Film: Halloween: Resurrection. (2002) **2.40** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.45** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.15 Film:** School for Scoundrels. (1960) **7.50 Film:** Whisky Galore! (1949) **9.10** Six Nations Rewind. **10.10** The Fred Dibnah Story. (R) **10.40** The Fred Dibnah Story. (R) **11.10** The Nature of Britain. (R) **12.00** A Taste of Britain. **12.30** Albert Finney: Talking Pictures. **1.00 Film:** The Victors. (1963) Second World War drama, starring George Peppard. **3.30** Africa's Fishing Leopards: Natural World. (R) **4.30** Final Score. **5.30** The Wonder of Animals. (R)

6.00 The Great British Sewing Bee. The seven remaining contestants are tested on their ability to add shape and structure to clothing, with their first task involving sewing together 12 pieces of fabric to make a boned corset. (R)

7.00 Flog It! Paul Martin and the team visit Derby, where items up for valuation include a German painting with a moving history, a pair of Disney figurines and a supposed 18-carat diamond ring. (R)

7.45 How We Got to Now with Steven Johnson. The science author examines the stories of the unsung people who made technological innovations in the sphere of cooling and refrigeration. From the heating engineer whose discovery of how to cool homes led to mass migration to previously inhospitable desert areas, to a man who cut ice from a lake and transported it thousands of miles, Steven sees how these inventions had far-reaching and unexpected consequences for creating the modern world.

8.45 Dad's Army. Godfrey learns his cottage is scheduled for demolition to make way for a new airstrip. (R)

9.15 Reginald D Hunter's Songs of the South. The comedian explores the musical heritage of Alabama and Georgia, examining Muscle Shoals' role in the development of soul and visiting the home town of the B52s and REM.

10.15 The Rise of James Brown: Mr Dynamite.

11.55 Film: Brooklyn's Finest. (2009) Three Brooklyn police officers face contrasting personal dilemmas as their careers converge at a single moment. Crime thriller, starring Richard Gere.

2.00 Film: Beauty & the Briefcase. (2010) **3.20** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. **8.30** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. **8.50** Scrambled!: Hulk and the Agents of Smash. **9.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.30** ITV News; Weather. **12.35** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.35** Tipping Point. (R) **2.35** The Chase. (R) **3.35** Doc Martin. (R) **4.35** Big Star's Little Star. (R) **5.35** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.45** ITV News; Weather.

6.00 You've Been Framed! Top 100 Holidays. Comedian Harry Hill narrates a countdown of 100 vacation-themed camcorder calamities and viewer-submitted mobile-phone clips. (R)

7.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. The Geordie duo take control of TV presenter Richard Madeley in I'm a Celebrity Get Out of Me Ear!, the Supercomputer is in Edinburgh, where locals use hidden talents to win flights to New York, and one lucky member of the studio audience plays to win the contents of a commercial break.

8.25 Take Me Out. Soldier Darian from Hartlepool, para-athlete Tony from Cardiff, animal-rights campaigner Ben from London and hair colour technician Aaron from Hastings all vie for the attentions of 30 single women, intent on capturing their interest and securing a date. However, first they must get the female participants to keep their lights on as a sign of approval.

9.40 The Jonathan Ross Show. The host is joined by Hollywood actress Sigourney Weaver, Doc Martin star Martin Clunes, Arsenal legend Thierry Henry, controversial artist Tracey Emin and rapper Kanye West.

10.35 ITV News; Weather.

10.50 Boxing: Frampton Live. Carl Frampton v Chris Avalos. Mark Pougatch is joined by David Haye to present coverage of the bout for the IBF World Super Bantamweight title, from the Odyssey Arena in Belfast.

12.30 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Trans World Sport. **7.00** FIM Superbike World Championship. **7.25** The Grid. **7.55** The Morning Line. **9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** Frasier. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.25** Child Genius. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Doncaster and Newbury. **4.15** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.45** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.15** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.45** Come Dine with Me. (R)

6.15 The Simpsons. Homer wins $1million on the lottery, but keeps it a secret from his family. (R)

6.40 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Homes by the Sea. Architectural designer Charlie Luxton travels to the south Devon coast to investigate why it has become the most sought-after place in Britain to have a seaside property. He begins at a clifftop home near Brixham, before visiting a fisherman's cottage in Lympstone.

8.00 The World's Weirdest Weather. New series. A visit to a town in South Carolina where it's raining popcorn-like snow – actually little balls of ice called graupel that appear harmless but could trigger avalanches. Storm chaser Geoff Mackley films a dangerous concoction of volcanic ash, rocks, debris and water called lahar, and a man in Newfoundland records footage of a strange, rolling bank of fog that looks like a tsunami. In Canberra, there's a giant tornado born not from a thundercloud but from a colossal firestorm, while in the Peak District, strong winds defy gravity – blowing a waterfall upwards. Previously seen on More4.

9.00 Film: Cuban Fury. (2014) Premiere. A boy's dream of being a champion salsa dancer is shattered by bullies. Twenty years later, he returns to the dance floor as an overweight and under-confident adult, and tries to get his old footwork back in a bid to sweep his boss off her feet. Comedy, starring Nick Frost, Chris O'Dowd and Ian McShane.

10.55 Film: Runaway Jury. (2003) Courtroom thriller, with John Cusack and Gene Hackman.

1.25 The Last Leg. (R) **2.20** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.30** The Supervet. (R) **5.25** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** SpongeBob SquarePants. **10.35** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **11.30** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **12.30** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **1.25** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **2.25 Film:** Rio Bravo. (1959) Western, with John Wayne and Dean Martin. **5.10** 5 News Weekend. **5.15 Film:** Columbo: By Dawn's Early Light. (1974) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk and Patrick McGoohan.

7.10 NCIS. The driver of a Ferrari is gunned down by a motorcyclist and the victim is identified as petty officer Colin Boxer, who was holding down a second job as a valet parker and had borrowed the sports car. The owner of the vehicle turns out to be Vijay Chaya, the billionaire head of a large corporation, and the team suspects a case of mistaken identity. (R)

8.05 NCIS. Part one of two. A navy lieutenant dies after a fight, but the sole witness has post-traumatic stress disorder from his military experiences and his testimony cannot be relied upon. (R)

9.00 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. A call leads DB and the team to descend on an abandoned building, where they find a murder scene with no body that appears to have already had the full CSI treatment. The evidence makes Nick and Sara fear the Gig Harbour serial killer has resurfaced, even though the man found guilty of the murders is currently residing on death row, while Julie believes that Jared's twin Paul may have undertaken a copycat killing in an effort to undermine his brother's conviction.

10.00 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. The detectives call on the help of Dr Warner when the death of a baby from Aids forces Stabler and Benson to crack down on a clinic dealing in bogus medicine. (R)

10.55 Law & Order. A politician is embroiled in a triple murder, but persuading him to reveal the truth is only the first step toward unmasking the killer.

11.50 True Crimes: The First 72 Hours. The case of Newfoundland man Gregory Parsons, who was wrongly convicted of murdering his mother. (R)

12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** 10,000 BC. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.15** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Great Movie Mistakes **7.10** Great TV Mistakes **8.10** Top Gear **9.15 Film:** Deja Vu (2006) **11.10** Family Guy **1.00** Uncle **1.30** South Side Story **2.00** An Idiot's Guide to Politics **3.00** Great TV Mistakes

BBC Four
7.00 The Secret Life of Elephants **8.00** A Very British Murder with Lucy Worsley **9.00** Hostages **10.25** Charlie Brooker's Weekly Wipe **10.55** Spike Milligan: Love, Light and Peace **11.55** Brothers in Arms **12.55** The Kinks at the BBC **1.55** The Secret Life of Elephants **2.55** A Very British Murder with Lucy Worsley **3.55** Close

ITV2
11.15 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway **12.40 Film:** Evan Almighty (2007) **2.35** The Hot Desk: Kelly Clarkson **2.50** The Brit Awards 2015 **5.10 Film:** Nanny McPhee (2005) **7.10 Film:** Jurassic Park (1993) **9.40** Take Me Out – The Gossip **10.25** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **10.55** Reality Bites **11.40** Ibiza Weekender **12.35** Crazy Beaches **1.05** Hell's Kitchen **1.55** Fake Reaction **2.30** Life's Funniest Moments **2.55** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
11.40 A Touch of Frost **1.55** Wycliffe **3.05 Film:** Carry On at Your Convenience (1971) **4.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Doc Martin **8.00** Foyle's War **10.05** Lewis **12.10** A Touch of Frost **2.10** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
12.45 Film: Dragnet (1987) **2.50 Film:** Dunkirk (1958) **5.35 Film:** Police Academy 5: Assignment Miami Beach (1988) **7.30** Championship Boxing Live **10.45** Cricket World Cup Highlights **11.50 Film:** The Island (1980) **2.10** River Monsters **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.00 Taking New York **12.00** Marry Me **12.30** New Girl **1.30** Melissa & Joey **2.30** Baby Daddy **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **4.30** How I Met Your Mother **5.30** Troy **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** He's Just Not That Into You (2009) **11.35** The Big Bang Theory **12.30** The Inbetweeners **1.35** Rude Tube **2.35** Troy **3.30** 2 Broke Girls **3.55** Suburgatory **4.35** Desperate Housewives

Film4
11.00 Gunman's Walk (1958) **1.00** First Daughter (2004) **3.10** A Monster in Paris (2011) **4.55** Tea with Mussolini (1999) **7.15** The Animal (2001) **8.55** Men in Black 3 Interview Special **9.00** The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (2011) **11.25** The Last Exorcism Part II (2013) **1.10** Nosferatu the Vampyre (1979)

ADVERTISEMENT

Revolution *in denture provision*

Suction solution *is this the answer for you?*

A CHAMPION for denture wearers, Steven Burchell DipCDT RCS(Eng) has spent more than ten years campaigning to "break the taboo over false teeth and prove that high-quality dentures can indeed be nothing short of life-changing."

Evangelical about what new-generation denture prescriptions can achieve, he says the palette of solutions to deliver a more youthful, engaging smile has never been so great, with traditional, high-quality handmade-on-the-premises prosthetics; suction diaphragm dentures; and implant-retained over-dentures.

"People have come to us with ill-fitting teeth, sunken cheeks and pinched lips and we have been privileged to transform their looks, providing teeth that not only are aesthetically pleasing and hugely functional, but also successfully support facial structures just like their real teeth once did. It can take years off people."

Can dentures ever be glamorous? "Emphatically, yes," adds Steven.

Strident advances in technology, improved materials and revised clinical procedures are all helping "to drive the denture revolution forward and indeed introduce a real sense of natural-looking glamour to what can be accomplished," he says.

A CUTTING-EDGE development that helps to resolve the stability problems faced by thousands of denture wearers is being offered by the Denture Clinic.

Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) GDC108353, who heads the teams at his North Street practice in Dudley, and other clinics across the region, says the invention has the potential to resolve all-too-common denture stability issues.

Prosthetics are held in place by tiny valve-operated suction devices which are built into the prescription. A clever diaphragm principle, triggered by bite pressure on patients' gums, creates a 'sucking' vacuum between the soft-tissue mouth lining and the prosthetic.

Steven, whose clinics attracts patients from as far as Spain, the Isle of Skye and the Isle of Anglesey, says: "In recent times we have seen, what I can describe only as strident clinical steps forward, with implant-retained over-dentures, 'teeth-in-a-day' implant procedures and suction solution dentures, all coming into main-stream dentistry.

"We also have clever injection moulding technology which allows excellent fitting outcomes and our clinical solutions have never been so appealing.

"Implant dentistry as a resolve for stabilisation issues is not suitable for everyone, neither is it all patients' first preference. The Ultra Suction prosthetics system offers a possible alternative clinical solution.

The Ultra Suction system is available for both upper and lower dentures.

"The beauty of this affordable technology is that it can deliver for the right patient excellent denture retainer qualities without the invasive clinical procedures required for implant work."

Lower dentures can often be troublesome when stability is compromised by shrinking gums and bone erosion – all part of the natural ageing process. Ill-fitting dentures create painful friction problems on gums and not least, can be a regular source of embarrassment.

Reduction

Steven adds: "The device can be mounted on upper or lower teeth and because of its efficiency allows us to consider a reduction in the size of the acrylic 'plate' which can improve speech and taste.

"We have always endeavoured to be on the very cusp of clinical development and this is another 'tool 'in our commitment to always try to deliver outcomes greater than patient expectations."

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CHOICE

Sean Lock

Let's Play Darts for Comic Relief (BBC2, 9pm)

Darts players are typically a no-nonsense bunch, so it's not surprising that this new pro-celeb series does precisely what it says on the tin: famous faces play darts, in aid of Comic Relief. They're not thrown in at the deep end of the oche with no training, though – they're helped along their way by a mentor from the world of professional darts. Among those taking part are Richard Osman, who is so tall he's at a distinct advantage – playing darts for him must be like sticking a pin in a notice board at arm's length. Tim Vine, Lee Mack, Roisin Conarty, Bob Mortimer, Liza Tarbuck, Sean Lock and Martin Offiah also compete, and best of all they must each adopt their own 'darts persona' including nickname and walk-on music.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Sunday Politics. **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. With Mark Chapman and the Match of the Day team. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** My Chinese New Year. **2.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Ireland v England (Kick-off 3.00pm). **5.00** Songs of Praise. **5.35** BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

6.00 The Big Painting Challenge. The nine remaining amateur artists face three challenges in portraiture on London's Southbank. For the opening task, they are given four hours to create pictures of themselves from their reflections. This is followed by a quick-draw where they have 30 minutes to attempt an anatomically accurate sketch that captures the likeness of a stranger. In their last chance to impress before the elimination, there's a four-hour sitting with EastEnders actor Rudolph Walker and Albert Square legend Pam St Clement.

7.00 Countryfile. The team visits Pembrokeshire to mark St David's Day, with Matt Baker foraging for food and Ellie Harrison heading out to sea in the hope of catching a glimpse of a porpoise; Weather for the Week Ahead.

8.00 Call the Midwife. Two old schoolmates have a less than happy reunion at the maternity home, while Barbara makes a revolutionary suggestion to help Mary Cynthia treat the bedsores of her patient.

9.00 The Casual Vacancy. Tensions rise in Pagford as the election approaches and each side steps up its campaign, while news of a tragedy leaves the whole community reeling.

10.00 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Liverpool v Manchester City and Arsenal v Everton. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League matches at Anfield and the Emirates Stadium.

11.35 The League Cup Show. Chelsea v Tottenham Hotspur. Manish Bhasin presents action from the final at Wembley Stadium, as the London rivals contested the first major domestic silverware of 2015.

12.15 The Apprentice USA. **1.40** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.45** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.15** Great British Garden Revival. (R) **7.15** Glorious Gardens from Above. (R) **8.00** Countryfile. (R) **9.00** The Football League Show. (R) **10.20** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.50** The Great Comic Relief Bake Off. (R) **12.50** A Taste of Britain. (R) **1.20** A Taste of Britain. (R) **1.50** Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em. (R) **2.15** Three Up, Two Down. (R) **2.45** Hi-de-Hi! (R) **3.15** Flog It! (R) **4.00** Speed Dreams: The Fastest Place on Earth. (R) **5.00 Film:** The Tuxedo. (2002) Comedy adventure, starring Jackie Chan.

6.30 Pompidou. New series. Comedy about a penniless aristocrat who lives with his butler and their dog in a caravan parked in front of his now crumbling estate. With Matt Lucas and Alex MacQueen.

7.00 The Fifteen Billion Pound Railway. Engineer Linda Miller battles to rebuild a Victorian tunnel under the Royal Docks in the East End as part of the Crossrail train line linking east and west London. Meanwhile, the Berminghams attempt to follow in the footsteps of 19th-century father-and-son team Marc and Isambard Kingdom Brunel as they construct a new tunnel beneath the Thames. (R)

8.00 Top Gear. Jeremy Clarkson and James May set off on an epic adventure to rescue Richard Hammond from a remote area of Canada. Gillian Anderson is the Star in the Reasonably Priced Car.

9.00 Let's Play Darts for Comic Relief. New series. Gabby Logan hosts a contest in which big names from the world of darts join forces with celebrities in a knockout tournament held at the Lakeside, Frimley Green.

9.50 Film: Cosmopolis. (2012) Premiere. A billionaire driven across Manhattan in a limousine discovers that an unexpected development in the stock market is poised to destroy his financial empire. As his fortune crumbles before his eyes, the real world starts to infringe on his sheltered existence through a series of strange encounters. David Cronenberg's drama, starring Robert Pattinson.

11.30 Film: Genghis Khan. (1965) Historical adventure, starring Omar Sharif and James Mason.

1.30 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **2.30** Holby City. (R) **3.30** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Ultimate Spider-Man. **8.30** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. **8.50** Scrambled!: Deadtime Stories. (R) **9.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.35** ITV News; Weather. **12.45** Neil Diamond: One Night Only. (R) **1.55** Catchphrase. (R) **2.40** Tipping Point. (R) **3.40 Film:** A View to a Kill. (1985) Adventure, starring Roger Moore.

6.05 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.15 ITV News; Weather.

6.30 The Chase: Celebrity Special. Emmerdale actor Dominic Brunt (Paddy Kirk), dancer and choreographer Wayne Sleep, Royle Family star Ricky Tomlinson and Good Morning Britain's Charlotte Hawkins compete to win thousands of pounds for charity by taking on a trivia expert in a test of their general knowledge.

7.30 Off Their Rockers. New series. Hidden-camera comedy. Seb tries his hand at selling cheap suits, Sonia asks for help with a tricky crossword clue, and Mo wreaks havoc on his mobility scooter.

8.00 All Star Family Fortunes. Celebrity Big Brother winner Katie Price and actor Charlie Lawson, best known as Coronation Street's Jim McDonald, play to win money for charity with the help of their families.

9.00 Mr Selfridge. Harry struggles to keep Violette in check, Gordon unwittingly commissions a racy window display, Victor brokers a shady deal and George helps Kitty confront her attackers.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.15 Cricket World Cup Highlights. England v Sri Lanka. Georgie Bingham presents action from the Pool A match at the Westpac Stadium in Wellington.

11.15 Premiership Rugby Union. Highlights of the latest top-flight fixtures, including Northampton Saints v Harlequins, Wasps v Gloucester and Leicester Tigers v Sale Sharks.

12.15 The Store. **2.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.15** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.20 How I Met Your Mother. **6.45** How I Met Your Mother. **7.10** How I Met Your Mother. **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year. (R) **1.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.30 Film:** The Wizard of Oz. (1939) Musical fantasy, with Judy Garland. **4.30** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.35** Channel 4 News.

6.05 A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. Laura Hamilton helps a mother and son find a holiday home for the whole family in the Murcia region on Spain's Mediterranean coast, with a cash budget of £70,000.

7.00 Four Rooms. Gordon Watson, Celia Sawyer, Alex Proud and David Sonnenthal are in hot pursuit of a treasure gifted by Agatha Christie, an Elvis Presley photo album, a biblical ancient relic, a bronze skeleton and an artwork made in space, as they meet members of the public putting their prized possessions up for sale. Anita Rani presents.

8.00 The Auction House. Boss Roger tells art valuer Nick to raise his game and sell at least half his pictures or face the consequences – which include doing yoga with the boss. While Nick searches out new talent, such as an incognito street artist and a cat-loving former glamour model, Chelsea's upmarket clientele are on the hunt for the latest trends – and this week, it's animal skulls.

9.00 Indian Summers. As the Sipi Fair gets under way, the Indian community is allowed onto the grounds of the British Club. Ralph conspires to get Aafrin onside by granting him a sought-after promotion.

10.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jimmy Carr hosts the comedy panel show's version of the famous quiz, with team captains Sean Lock and Jon Richardson joined by guests Andrew Flintoff and Rhod Gilbert. (R)

11.05 Film: Twilight. (2008) Fantasy love story, with Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson.

1.25 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **2.15** The Million Pound Drop. (R) **3.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.25** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R) **5.30** Face the Clock. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.20** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.35** Pip Ahoy! (R) **6.45** The Mr Men Show. (R) **7.00** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.15** Olly the Little White Van. **7.20** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.35** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.45** Little Princess. (R) **8.00** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **8.10** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **8.20** Zack and Quack. (R) **8.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.50** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.05** LazyTown. (R) **9.35** Dora and Friends. **10.00** SpongeBob SquarePants. **10.35** Chinese Food in Minutes. (R) **10.50** The Dog Rescuers. (R) **11.20** The Hotel Inspector. (R) **12.15** The Hotel Inspector. (R) **1.15 Film:** Thunderbirds. (2004) Sci-fi adventure, starring Bill Paxton. **3.00 Film:** Arthur and the Invisibles. (2006) Part-animated fantasy adventure, starring Freddie Highmore. **4.45 Film:** Three Men and a Little Lady. (1990) Comedy sequel, starring Tom Selleck.

6.45 5 News Weekend.

6.50 Film: Ghost Rider. (2007) Motorcycle stuntman Johnny Blaze sells his soul to diabolical Mephistopheles to save the life of his father. His bargain dooms him to pass each night as Ghost Rider, a demonic skeletal biker bound to take evil souls to Hell. However, conflict between Mephistopheles and his son offers Johnny the chance to win back his humanity. Fantasy thriller based on the comic-book, starring Nicolas Cage, Eva Mendes and Wes Bentley. Edited for daytime broadcast.

9.00 Film: Total Recall. (2012) Premiere. A man living in a bleak future years after a nuclear war has fake memories of being a secret agent implanted into his brain. However, the procedure uncovers the fact that he really is a spy with his memory erased, and he is forced to become a fugitive from the totalitarian government. Sci-fi thriller remake, with Colin Farrell, Kate Beckinsale and Jessica Biel.

11.15 Film: Twelve Monkeys. (1995) A man goes back in time to investigate a disaster, but begins to think he is mad and has only imagined his life in the future. Sci-fi thriller, starring Bruce Willis and Brad Pitt.

1.50 SuperCasino. **3.10** 10,000 BC. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.15** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Don't Tell the Bride **8.00** The Voice UK **10.00** I Survived a Zombie Apocalypse **11.00** Family Guy **11.45** Uncle **12.15** American Dad! **12.35** I Survived a Zombie Apocalypse **1.35** Bangkok Airport **2.30** South Side Story **3.00** Bangkok Airport **4.00** Close

BBC Four

7.00 The Great War **7.40** Britain's Wild Places **8.00** Mark Lawson Talks to Alexander McCall Smith **9.00** Arts Question Time with Kirsty Wark **10.00** Storyville: The Great European Disaster Movie **11.20** The Great European Disaster Movie: Newsnight Debate **11.50** Animals Through the Night: Sleepover at the Zoo **1.20** Sounds of the Eighties **1.50** Synth Britannia at the BBC **2.50** Guitar Heroes at the BBC **3.50** Close

ITV2

12.10 Take Me Out **1.25** Take Me Out – The Gossip **2.05** You've Been Framed! **2.35** Scorpion **3.30** Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway **4.55 Film:** The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement (2004) **7.10 Film:** Jurassic Park III (2001) **9.00** Ibiza Weekender **10.00** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **10.30 Film:** American Pie Presents Band Camp (2005) **12.20 Film:** The Butterfly Effect (2004) **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV3

11.35 Rosemary & Thyme **12.35** A Touch of Frost **2.45** Agatha Christie's Marple **4.50** Inspector Morse **7.00** Lewis **9.00** Sunday Night at the Palladium **10.00** Birds of a Feather **10.35** City Lights **11.35** Lewis **1.30** Countrywise **2.20** Judge Judy **3.05** ITV3 Nightscreen **3.40** Emmerdale

ITV4

11.20 Pawn Stars **2.05** Storage Wars **3.00 Film:** Dragnet (1987) **5.10 Film:** Police Academy 5: Assignment Miami Beach (1988) **7.00** The Big Fish Off **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union **9.00 Film:** Pale Rider (1985) **11.25 Film:** Buried (2010) **1.20** River Monsters: Untold Stories **2.20** Hogan's Heroes **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

12.30 Revenge **1.30** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **2.30** The 100 **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.00 Film:** Transformers (2007) **10.00** The Inbetweeners **11.05** Rude Tube **12.10** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **12.40** How I Met Your Mother **1.40** Rules of Engagement **2.30** Taking New York **3.25** Hollyoaks

Film4

11.00 The Mark of Zorro (1940) **1.00** Home Alone 3 (1997) **3.00** Rio (2011) **4.50** Turner & Hooch (1989) **6.55** Terminal Velocity (1994) **9.00** Shallow Hal (2001) **11.15** Kill List (2011) **1.05** The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser (1974) **3.25** Close

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
The Daisy Chain, BBC1, 12.35am
A couple move to a remote village to recover from the death of their baby. They agree to take in an autistic girl whose parents have died, despite warnings from the locals that she is an evil spirit. Horror, starring Samantha Morton and Steven Mackintosh. (2008)

TUESDAY
Cemetery Junction, BBC1, 11.45pm
A young man in 1970s Reading starts to question what he wants out of life, but finds his friends happy with their lot. He starts a new job selling insurance door to door, only to run into an old girlfriend. Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant's comedy drama, starring Christian Cooke, Tom Hughes and Jack Doolan. (2010)

WEDNESDAY
Three Fugitives, BBC1, 12.15am
A bank robber resolves to go straight after his release from prison. However, on his first day of freedom, he ends up as an innocent bystander during a heist. When the cops assume he is the brains of the operation, he is forced to go on the run. Comedy, with Nick Nolte, Martin Short and James Earl Jones. (1989)

Gladiator, Friday, ITV, 10.40pm

FRIDAY
Gladiator, ITV, 10.40pm
Roman general Maximus Decimus Meridius is a casualty of a power struggle between the corrupt Emperor Commodus and the senate. Ordered to be put to death along with his family, he escapes his would-be killers but is sold into slavery as a gladiator – but uses his fame in the arena to fight against the tyrant. Oscar-winning period epic, with Russell Crowe. (2000)

Papillon, BBC2, 11.35pm
Fact-based drama about a Frenchman wrongly imprisoned for life for a crime he did not commit, who made an extraordinarily courageous bid to escape from the notorious Devil's Island. Starring Steve McQueen, Dustin Hoffman and George Coulouris. (1973)

Dog Soldiers, Channel 4, 12.25am
A run-of-the-mill training exercise turns into a bloodbath for soldiers on weekend manoeuvres in the Highlands. After rescuing the lone survivor of a massacred special forces unit, they are set upon by a pack of werewolves. British horror, starring Kevin McKidd, Sean Pertwee, Emma Cleasby and Liam Cunningham. (2002)

PICK OF THE WEEK

You can always bank on Stephen to deliver

Crime dramas. They're ten a penny these days, but viewers still can't get enough of them

Broadchurch has only just ended and Midsomer Murders rarely seems to be off our screens, but that hasn't stopped ITV bringing back DCI Banks for its fourth series.

Not that we're complaining. The lead character has been vividly brought to life over the past few years by Stephen Tompkinson, who may not have been everyone's first choice for the role.

Banks was already well established in a series of books by Peter Robinson – but he's made it his own.

"I think the audience admire Banks' integrity and work ethic," says Tompkinson. "He's a no-nonsense policeman and doesn't have any particular quirks.

"Banks is married to his job as a detective chief inspector. He's the type of policeman you'd want on your case as he's a true professional and always gives 100 per cent.

"I think people want a policeman who isn't fanciful in any way if they are working to seek justice. People want them to do their job to the best of their ability, and Banks is the sort of man you can rely on to do just that."

The first case of the new run involves the murder of an Estonian woman who was buried alive on a piece of waste ground.

She had come to Britain to search for her missing sister who was working as a prostitute, and suspicion falls on the autistic son of her driver.

But while Banks is dealing with this difficult investigation he must also deal with personal issues.

One involves his on/off lover Annie's decision to renew her relationship with an old flame, and the other the death of his mother, which forces him to spend time with Arthur, his estranged father.

"Banks' mother's death comes completely out of the blue for him and his father," explains Tompkinson.

"Banks' brother was also killed in the second series so now it's only him and his father left.

Their relationship isn't the easiest. They have to deal with the shock of losing her whilst trying to look after each other.

"They have to get to know each other again and it's quite an emotional journey. Banks finds it difficult when Arthur points out his personality defects. At this time in his life he has to think about what he's going to do, and who he's going to end up with."

Does that mean there is no chance of Banks and Annie ever getting back together? Fans would certainly be unhappy at the thought of them staying just good friends forever.

"Annie told Banks she couldn't hang around forever as she has to think of her daughter Isla," smiles Tompkinson. "In this series Annie has moved on and renewed her relationship with David, who is Isla's father. There's not really anything Banks can do about it…

"But watching Annie walk away from him is hard – and whether he acts on that, we'll have to wait and see!"

Andrea Lowe, Caroline Catz, Jack Deam, Danny Rahim, Keith Barron, Polly Hemingway, Edward MacLiam, Badria Timimi and Steve Toussaint also star.

Stephen Tompkinson stars in DCI Banks, Wednesday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Arthur & George
ITV, 9pm
Think of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and the name Sherlock Holmes will no doubt spring to mind. Conan Doyle created the great detective, but led an exciting and intriguing life in his own right – and this three-part drama, based on a Julian Barnes novel, focuses on one aspect of it. It's 1903 and, while mourning the death of his wife Louisa, Arthur finds something to distract him – the case of vicar's son George Edalji, a solicitor imprisoned for allegedly mutilating animals and sending a series of threatening letters. Conan Doyle joins forces with his trusted manservant to clear George's name. Martin Clunes stars as the author, while Arsher Ali plays the unfortunate man he is trying to help.

TUESDAY
The Gift
BBC1, 9pm
Peter Miles served six years in prison for his part in a series of armed robberies across Bristol. He turns to Mel Giedroyc to help him find a way of making amends with those he affected. Twenty-six years ago, Pauline Stepney's daughter was born 14 weeks prematurely, and doctors had to fight to keep the baby alive while she was stuck 50 miles away at home. Unable to make regular visits, the new mum sunk into depression, until a stranger offered to drive her to the hospital every day. Pauline would now like to say thank you for an act of kindness that had a big impact on her life. Last in the series.

Horizon: Secrets of the Solar System
BBC2, 9pm
Planets are now being discovered outside the Earth's solar system on a regular basis, and these strange new worlds are forcing scientists to rewrite the history of how the Sun and the planets, satellites, dwarf planets, asteroids and comets that orbit it came into being. This programme reveals that far from a simple story of stable objects orbiting a star, the development of the Solar System was a potent combination of hellfire, chaos and planetary pinball that makes it somewhat of a miracle that Earth was created at all.

WEDNESDAY
Big Star's Little Star
ITV, 8pm
Don't ever work with children or animals – that's the golden rule in telly, they say. But the leading lights behind this superb series understand that actually, it's the little ones who make the best television – because of their unpredictability. For the producers behind this game show, the youth are comedy gold, as Stephen Mulhern grills them about their celebrity parents and hopes they will spill their deepest secrets. As the series kicks off, Ronan Keating plays alongside his nine-year-old daughter Ali, while Sheree Murphy and her six-year-old daughter Matilda, and Carl Froch and his four-year-old son Rocco also join in the fun. But which of the celebs will be the most fidgety with nerves?

Big Star's Little Star, Wednesday, ITV, 8pm

The Great Comic Relief Bake Off
BBC1, 8pm
Ed Byrne hosts the final edition, joined by four more well-known faces hoping to inspire people to get baking for Comic Relief. Comedian and actress Victoria Wood, former Radio 1 DJ Chris Moyles, model and TV presenter Alexa Chung and Asylum star Kayvan Novak are the hopefuls, who will be tackling a traybake.

THURSDAY
Banished
BBC2, 9pm
Wolf Hall may have finished last week, but BBC Two is hitting us with another prestige period drama that's about more than just corsets and romance. If the involvement of writer Jimmy McGovern, aka the man who gave us Cracker and The Street, doesn't convince you that Banished is going to be gritty, then the premise should. It's set in 1788, in the camp occupied by the first British convicts transported to Australia, and in the opening episode, Elizabeth Quinn (MyAnna Buring) is in trouble for being caught of her dormitory, while James Freeman (Russell Tovey) discovers his already meagre food ration has been stolen.

FRIDAY
The Musketeers
BBC1, 9pm
Porthos demands answers from his new-found family after uncovering the truth about his parentage. As he learns more secrets about his past, he begins to question his allegiance to the Musketeers – who in turn harbour suspicions of their own as they process the revelations in their friend's life. Can d'Artagnan and his comrades save Porthos from the dangerous route he seems to be headed down, and can they even be certain of where his loyalties lie?

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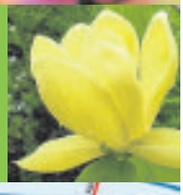

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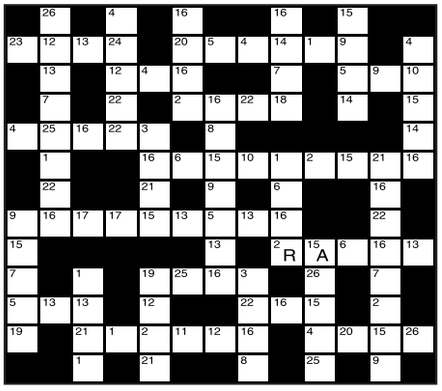
BRAIN GYM No.314

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



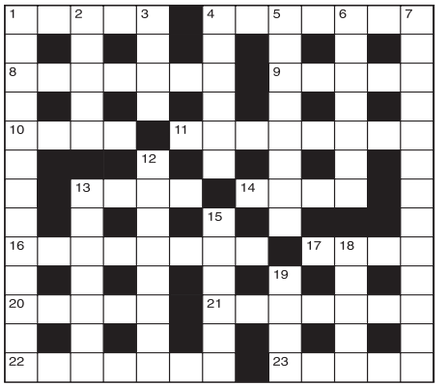
1	14
2 R	15 A
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1 O	2 R	3 F	4 W	5 G	6 E	7 B	8 L	9 Q	10 H	11 M	12 A	13 S
14 V	15 U	16 T	17 C	18 D	19 K	20 Z	21 I	22 N	23 P	24 X	25 J	26 Y

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Acted as a would-be officer (5)
4. A faultless rider could still put his foot in it (7)
8. New ones may be expensive if stout, perhaps (7)
9. A wedge shot that doesn't go straight (5)
10. Posh sort of business (4)
11. They fight, though they're not boxers (8)
13. Written authority for many to strike (4)
14. It makes fast speed at sea (4)
16. An aptitude to write and sing (8)
17. Boast about dress (4)
20. A gesture one doesn't care to make (5)
21. Notedly brisk (7)
22. The peace subsequently includes the French (7)
23. It's erect, whichever way you look at it (3,2)

Down

1. Angry over intentions that may lead to misunderstanding (5,8)
2. Do fully (5)
3. Tidy haircut (4)
4. A better method? (6)
5. Taking cover (8)
6. Time ran out for such clothing (7)
7. Set out to influence the powers that be (8,5)
12. Superior neighbour in the U.S. (8)
13. Manage a medium agency (7)
15. The occupant is at home with his wife (6)
18. Not left any entitlement (5)
19. Thunderous applause? (4)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Fat (5)
4. Advantage (7)
8. Petty (7)
9. Lucid (5)
10. Destiny (4)
11. Half a minim (8)
13. Profound (4)
14. Extremely (4)
16. Marred (8)
17. Notion (4)
20. Ingenuous (5)
21. Shorten (7)
22. Voter (7)
23. Mirror (5)

Down

1. Exasperated (3,2,8)
2. Live (5)
3. Wicked (4)
4. Campanile (6)
5. Fine points (8)
6. Newly (7)
7. Reverse fortunes (4,3,6)
12. Dregs (8)
13. Rob (7)
15. Swordsman (6)
18. Play (5)
19. Conceited person (4)

Sudoku

2		8			9	5		
	5			4			1	
					5		4	
	9	7	2				6	3
		3		9	6			
1	8				3	2	5	
	3		6					5
	1			2			3	
		4		5		8		7

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

7	3	4	2	6	9	8	1	5
6	1	8	4	7	5	2	9	3
5	2	9	8	3	1	6	7	4
4	9	3	1	5	2	7	8	6
8	6	2	3	4	7	1	5	9
1	7	5	6	9	8	3	4	2
9	5	1	7	2	3	4	6	8
3	4	7	9	8	6	5	2	1
2	8	6	5	1	4	9	3	7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 3 Intercept; 8 Cock; 9 Put across; 10 Peahen; 11 Donor; 14 Giber; 15 Nuts; 16 Limbo; 18 Ahoy; 20 Chair; 21 Keeps; 24 Matron; 25 Halloween; 26 Esau; 27 Ill-wisher. Down: 1 Scapegoat; 2 Scrapbook; 4 Noun; 5 Erato; 6 Carbon; 7 Pisa; 9 Pearl; 11 Dumas; 12 Run across; 13 Astronaut; 17 Ocean; 19 Yellow; 22 Pawns; 23 Call; 24 Mete. QUICK - Across: 3 Physician; 8 Omen; 9 Unmindful; 10 Spring; 11 Sheen; 14 Admit; 15 Lure; 16 Erase; 18 Long; 20 Error; 21 Drive; 24 Dismal; 25 Burlesque; 26 Onus; 27 Infertile. Down: 1 Constable; 2 Reprimand; 4 Hang; 5 Smith; 6 Cudgel; 7 Abut; 9 Unite; 11 Shape; 12 Nutriment; 13 Heartless; 17 Eerie; 19 Grille; 22 Visit; 23 Turn; 24 Dull.

Quiz

1. Who preceded Ronald Reagan as president of the USA?
2. Which British football team was the first to win a European trophy?
3. What was Wagner's last opera?
4. In which card game does a player get one for his nob?
5. Which former Tory cabinet minister and General Synod member joined the Roman Catholic church in the 1990s?
6. Which literary critic wrote The Great Tradition?
7. In which discipline did Nicky Gooch win a Winter Olympic bronze medal in 1994?
8. How is deoxyribonucleic acid better known?
9. In what type of dance are zapateados performed?
10. By what name is the constellation Crux also known?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Bauhaus; 2 Leander; 3 Pitchblende; 4 George Eliot; 5 Jamaica; 6 Sir Stanley Spencer; 7 Spider plant; 8 Copper; 9 United Arab Emirates; 10 Tom Hanks.

Niner: BACHELORS

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

43287 gives a wading bird,
623978 gives a small animal,
1289573 gives a wild animal.

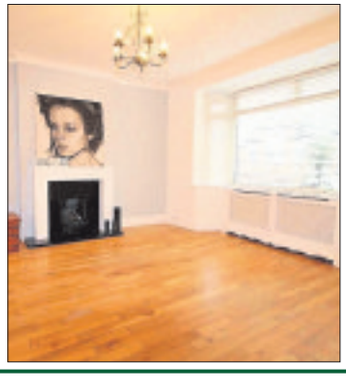
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Stunning extended home that has the wow factor

THIS stunning four-bedroomed family home in Tenterfields, Halesowen, with the "wow factor" has been vastly extended and refurbished to a high standard.

It is for sale through Billingham Taylor at offers in excess of £325,000.

Beautifully decorated throughout in neutral, contemporary shades, distinctive features include a spacious entrance hallway with under-stairs storage, a WC, a large open plan kitchen/diner, a dining room, an open plan family room, a utility, a separate sitting room with a bay window, a master suite with a stylish en suite shower room, three further bedrooms (bedroom three with wardrobes) and a luxurious house bathroom. Outside are landscaped rear gardens with decking, a garage and a driveway. Contact Billingham Taylor on 01384 234900 or visit www.billinghamtaylor.co.uk



Spacious detached in a desirable area

A SPACIOUS detached house with good good sized bedrooms, 2b Tansley Hill Road, Oakham, Dudley, is for sale through The Property Shop a £294,950 with no chain.

Set in a desirable area the property comprises of an entrance hall, living room, dining room, fitted breakfast kitchen, a ground floor WC, four good sized bedrooms, ensuite to the master and family bathroom, double glazing and central heating, a large front driveway, garage and a garden.

A viewing is highly recommended to appreciate the standard of accommodation on offer.

For further information contact The Property Shop on 01384 444645 or visit www.thepropertyshop.co.uk website.

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School Lane Hagley DY9 9LD
A semi detached investment cottage with the original parts probably over 200 years old, construction is of solid brick walls part rendered to front with pitched tiled roof. 2 reception rooms, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, garden. The property is let on an oral Regulated Tenancy at a registered fair rent. Energy Rating E
GUIDE PRICE £120,000 PLUS
CONTACT STOURPORT OFFICE: 01299 822060

School Lane Hagley DY9 9LD
A semi detached investment cottage, living room, kitchen, wc, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, garden. The property is let on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy. Energy Rating E
GUIDE PRICE £125,000 PLUS
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School Lane Hagley DY9 9LD
A semi detached cottage, living room, kitchen, bathroom, 2 bedrooms, garden. Vacant possession upon completion. Energy Rating E
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Wood Street Kidderminster DY11 6UB
A spacious four bedroom end of terrace house. Ex-off-licence on prominent corner position. Living Room. Dining Room. Kitchen. Cellarage. Four Bedrooms. Family Bathroom. Gas to radiator central heating. EPC: E
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Bullus Road Stourport DY13 9DG
A spacious and extended 2/3 bedroom 2-bathroom semi detached house requiring refurbishment. Substantial modern side extension and good sized south facing rear gardens. Living room, separate dining room or ground floor bedroom 3, bathroom, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, further first floor bathroom, off road parking. Vacant possession upon completion. Energy Rating E
GUIDE PRICE £85,000- £105,000
CONTACT STOURPORT OFFICE: 01299 822060

Fort Mahon Place Bewdley DY12 2PB
A substantial and traditionally built two double bedroom detached bungalow. Hall. Bathroom. Recently refitted Kitchen. Living Room. Integral Garage. Driveway plus fore and rear gardens. Double glazed. Gas to radiator central heating. Energy Rating E
GUIDE PRICE £125,000- £140,000
CONTACT KIDDERMINSTER OFFICE: 01562 822244

Redstone Lane Stourport DY13 0JQ
A 3-bedroom link semi detached house requiring up-grading and re-fitting. Recessed porch, reception hall, through lounge/dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, bathroom, off road parking, south facing rear gardens, immense further potential, vacant possession upon completion. Energy Rating D
GUIDE PRICE £100,000- £120,000
CONTACT STOURPORT OFFICE: 01299 822060

Shrawley Avenue K'minster DY11 7NP
A 3-bedroom semi detached "Wates" style pre-fabricated re-inforced concrete (PRC) house built around 1949 and having a large plot on the fringe of the Rifle Range Estate in Kidderminster. Reception hall, through lounge/dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, bathroom, vacant possession upon completion. Energy Rating D
GUIDE PRICE £60,000- £70,000
CONTACT STOURPORT OFFICE: 01299 822060

Tanwood Lane Chaddesley Corbett DY10 4NT
A detached country cottage surrounded by open countryside and standing on a good level plot approaching 1.3 acres or thereabouts. The property is set within a particularly nice rural but not isolated location between Chaddesley Corbett and Belbroughton. A very rare opportunity within this incredibly sought after area. Vacant possession upon completion Energy Rating G
GUIDE PRICE £250,000- £300,000
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All-new supercar from Lotus

By James Parker

The new Lotus Evora 400 is the latest pure and focused supercar from Lotus, combining high performance with the legendary Lotus benchmark handling. It is faster and dynamically more capable than the previous Lotus Evora leading to greater agility and a more involving drive.

Maximum speed is 186 mph (300 km/h) and acceleration 0-60 mph is just 4.1 seconds (0-100 km/h in 4.2 seconds). This enables the new Lotus Evora 400 to lap the challenging test track at the Lotus Headquarters in Hethel, Norfolk, a scintillating six seconds faster than the previous model.

Over two thirds of the Lotus Evora 400 is new, including its supercharged and charge-cooled mid-mounted 3.5-litre V6 engine producing 400 horsepower and 410 Nm of torque.

A new aluminium chassis incorporates a new interior and the lightweight composite body has changed significantly both front and rear.

Following the core values of the company, not only is the new Lotus Evora 400 faster than the previous model, it is also 22 kg lighter, achieved through careful and clever design and attention to detail. This weight reduction is even more impressive considering that the supercar has more power and a higher standard specification than before.

In describing the remit for the new Lotus Evora 400, Jean-Marc Gales, Chief Executive Officer for Group Lotus plc, states: "A requirement for all Lotus cars is to be a benchmark for handling, to be the quickest car from A to B and to provide the driver with a pure and involving driving experience.

"The Evora 400 is the fastest road-going Lotus that we have ever produced, possessing performance that can only be matched by cars costing significantly more.

"It delivers supercar looks allied to supercar performance."

Emphatic

Jean-Marc Gales continues, "We have always said that to make a car better, you must make it faster and lighter.

"We have achieved this, of course, but we didn't stop there, as the considerable number of changes in the interior, chassis, engine and body design have warranted emphatically, the title of a new Lotus Evora.

"Our dealer network stands at 168 worldwide, which is still growing to reach 200 dealers by the end of 2015, while our sales volumes have increased by over 50% in the last 10 months.

"The new Lotus Evora 400 will make its mark as a significant milestone in the history of Lotus.

"Looking to the future, the Lotus Evora 400 will remain core to our product line up for many years to come, with more exciting derivatives planned within the next few years."

'Evora 400 is the fastest road-going Lotus that we have ever produced.'

The new Lotus Evora 400 will enter production for European markets in the summer and deliveries will commence in August this year. North American markets will receive the Evora 400 as a 2016 model year presentation in the Autumn.

Combined production for all Lotus models will increase to 70 cars per week by September 2015 and an additional 150 highly skilled operators and craftsmen and women will be recruited in the next four months to accommodate this rise in production. Prices will be announced closer to the on-sale date.

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Preview and double world premiere at the Geneva Motor Show

By David Banner

Vauxhall is to preview OnStar at the 2015 Geneva Motor Show next month with a comprehensive package including high-speed mobile network and numerous services across its passenger car range. There will also be world premieres for the all-new VIVA and the Corsa VXR.

In the second half of 2015, Vauxhall will introduce OnStar across its passenger car range. OnStar will represent the next step in automotive connectivity in Europe. In the USA, Canada, China and Mexico around seven million customers already count on the comprehensive package, which includes Wi-Fi hotspot and numerous mobile and emergency services.

OnStar is reliable. No matter what emergency the driver may be confronted with when on the road – the system can offer assistance, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. An advisor will always be available.

And if the airbag deploys, Vauxhall OnStar will be activated automatically.

Smartphone

Information on and access to the car is also guaranteed. Vehicle data such as tyre pressure or oil life can be accessed via the OnStar smartphone app.

Locking/unlocking can also be controlled via the app. And if the car is stolen, OnStar will 'work' closely with the police to locate the stolen vehicle.

The Vehicle Diagnostics functionality is also very convenient: OnStar will send a monthly report with the most important vehicle data and information. Furthermore, a diagnostics check can be requested at any time at the push of a button.

With the introduction of OnStar, each Vauxhall will become a powerful, mobile Wi-Fi hotspot. Up to seven mobile devices can be connected simultaneously allowing for passengers to stay in touch with family and friends via social media, stream movies or watch TV via their favourite app and play games or for the driver to work while away from the office when stationary.

Debuting at Geneva in March and arriving in the United Kingdowm in the summer, the VIVA will be the latest addition to Vauxhall's small car range joining the funky ADAM and the new Corsa.

With a name that pays homage to Vauxhall's original Viva made from 1963 to 1979, the all-new VIVA shares the original's philosophy of clean lines, durability and practicality. It is designed for modern, everyday life and at 3.68 metres long is practical and spacious, providing room for up to five people.

Viva

After first appearing in the ADAM ROCKS AIR and subsequently the New Corsa, VIVA is the latest Vauxhall to feature its new 1.0-litre three-cylinder ECOTEC engine. Specially-developed for VIVA, this 75PS powertrain is smooth, punchy and efficient, and is mated to a slick five-speed transmission.

Like its stablemates, ADAM and Corsa, VIVA is fully-connected thanks to the IntelliLink infotainment system, which allows seamless integration of Apple iOS and Android devices.

Vauxhall will take the wraps off the new Corsa VXR, its ultra-powerful small hot-hatch, at Geneva.

Benefiting from the significant revisions in technology, interior/exterior design and chassis showcased in the recently launched New Corsa, the VXR is set to raise the bar for small, fast hatchbacks when it appears in UK showrooms in May.

Headline performance figures are 0-60mph in 6.5 seconds and a top speed of 143mph – quicker than the outgoing car, but more importantly the VXR produces its 245Nm of torque from lower revs (between 1,900rpm and 5,800rpm, compared with 2,250rpm to 5,500rpm for the outgoing Nürburgring and ClubSport models).

This makes the VXR a very potent performer between 50-75mph, which it can dispatch in just 6.6 seconds when in fifth gear.

An overboost facility provides an additional 35Nm of torque, ideal for swift and safe overtaking.

Maximum power from its 1.6-litre turbocharged engine is 205PS, while the Corsa VXR achieves a claimed official 37.7mpg on the combined cycle with C02 emissions of 174g/km.

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VAUXHALL

Harnessing the sun to make cars glow in dark

By James Parker

Nissan has become the first manufacturer to apply glow-in-the-dark car paint to showcase how its market-leading, all-electric LEAF is helping more and more people convert to solar energy at home.

The manufacturer worked with inventor, Hamish Scott, creator of STARPATH, which is a spray-applied coating that absorbs UV energy during the day so that it glows for between eight and 10 hours when the sun goes down.

While glowing car paint is already available, as are glow-in-the-dark car wraps, the bespoke, ultraviolet-energised paint created especially for Nissan is unique thanks to its secret formula made up of entirely organic materials. It contains a very rare natural earth product called Strontium Aluminate, which is solid, odourless and chemically and biologically inert.

Various third-party companies have applied non-organic glow-in-the-dark paint to vehicles before but Nissan is the first car maker to directly apply such technology. Nissan's unique paint, if made commercially available, would last for 25 years.

With running costs of just two pence* or less per mile to run, the UK's 7,500 plus Nissan LEAF owners have reported significant savings and are using the money they save on a wide variety of items; among the more popular of these are solar panels for the home, which decreases the household carbon footprint and means owners are also effectively charging their vehicle for free.

Research revealed recently by Nissan showed that 89% of LEAF owners charge their cars at home overnight. Although solar panels do not store energy or provide it outside of daylight, any leftover power generated during the day is fed back into the national grid and homeowners can get a Government payment for it, meaning that the overnight charge is already paid for.

LEAF owner Ian Finch is one of those who has combined the savings offered by running an all-electric vehicle with solar panels to power his home.

"Running the Nissan LEAF costs a sixth of the amount we'd pay to run a diesel or petrol car," he said. "Overall, we are probably using 25% less electricity thanks to our solar panels and it's a fantastic experience to be able to drive the LEAF using electricity that's been produced completely for free."

To hear more on LEAF charging using solar energy, see the full interview with Ian here: http://youtu.be/xM9XRn1amqQ

Nissan Motor GB Limited EV manager, Paul O'Neill, said: "The Nissan LEAF is a shining beacon of sustainability and the future of motoring. Not only is it saving our customers money in running costs but it we are now seeing how it is helping people become more environmentally sensitive by reducing their carbon footprint."

See more of Nissan's glow-in-the-dark car by viewing http://youtu.be/nKj2sEpg1xg

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62	Note 1.6 N-Tec Auto Blue Only 6000 Miles	£8,795.00
61	Verso 1.6 V-Matic T2 7 Seats Blue Only 8000 Miles	£8,995.00
59	C3 Picasso 1.6 HDI VTR+ Blue Only 8000 Miles	£7,995.00
61	Note 1.6 N-Tec Auto Silver Only 9000 Miles	£7,995.00
13	Suzuki Swift 1.2 SZ2 Grey Only 9000 Miles	£7,495.00
63	C4 Picasso 1.6 HDI VTR+ Silver Only 10000 Miles	£12,995.00
11	C4 G Picas 1.6 HDI VTR+ EGS Red Only 10000 Miles	£10,795.00
61	Micra 1.2 Acenta Silver Only 10000 Miles	£6,495.00
59	C3 Picasso 1.6 HDI Exc Red Only 11000 Miles	£7,995.00
61	Gr Modus 1.5 DCI Dyn Silver Only 11000 Miles	£6,995.00

Citroen

60	C3 Picasso 1.6 HDI VTR+ Black 38k	£6,995.00
57	C4 Picasso 1.6 HDI VTR+ EGS Blue 52k	£5,295.00
63	C4 Picasso 1.6 HDI A/D VTR+ Grey 25k	£12,995.00
61	C4 G Picas 1.6 HDI VTR+ EGS Red 27k	£9,995.00
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61	DS3 1.6 DStyle Auto Blue 15k	£8,995.00

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12	Fiesta 1.2 Zetec Silver 18k	£7,995.00
60	Fiesta 1.25 Zetec 5dr Red 22k	£7,495.00
10	Fiesta 1.6 Titanium Red 41k	£7,495.00
09	Mondeo 2.0 TDCI Zetec 140 Silver 77k	£5,495.00

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61	Note 1.4 N-Tec Red 20k	£6,995.00
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61	Qashqai 1.5 DCI Acenta Red 24k	£10,995.00

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61	207 1.4 HDI Active 3dr Silver 20k	£6,795.00
61	308 1.6 HDI Access Vapour Grey 22k	£8,995.00
59	308 1.6 GT Coupe Cab Blue 25k	£8,995.00
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61	3008 1.6 HDi Exclusive Grey 16k	£10,995.00
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11	Gr Scenic 1.5 DCI Exp Auto Stone 22k	£7,995.00
60	Kangoo 1.6 Wheel/Chair Access Auto Red 15k	£8,995.00
07	Megane 1.6 Dyn Coupe Cab Silver 30k	£3,795.00
61	Scenic 1.5 DCI Dyn Tomtom Silver 15k	£8,795.00

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61	Meriva 1.7 CDTI 130 SE White 16k	£7,795.00
11	Meriva 1.7 CDTI Exc Auto Blue 25k	£6,295.00
05	Zafira 1.6 Exclusiv Black 89k	£1,995.00

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60	Lotus Evora 4 3.5 V6 +2 Silver 30k	£30,495.00
11	Mini One 1.6 Orange 12k	£8,995.00
10	Mitsubishi Colt 1.3 CZ2 Auto Silver 34k	£4,795.00
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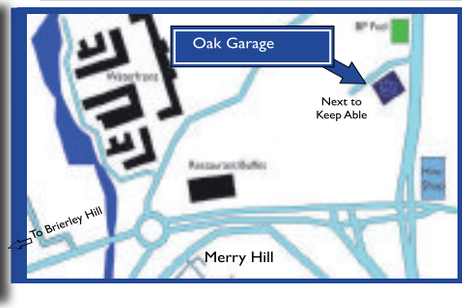
Only £100 Cash Deposit

Representative Example, C4 G Picasso AO61 JBX, Cash Price £9995 Cash Deposit £100, P/X £1422.73 Total Deposit £1522.73. Balance £8472.27. Acceptance Fee £199, Option To Purchase Fee £199, 48 Payments Of £150Followed By One Final Payment Of £3081.25. APR 8.5% Representative.



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religious notices

christadelphian

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ONE OWNER
FROM NEW, £6,995
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With or without damp.
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Cash waiting
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2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
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5 Business & Farming

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business directory

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PEUGEOT 3008 Allure, 2011, red, 1.6 diesel, auto, full glass roof, folding electric mirrors, 27,400 miles, £8,250 ono. 01785 716292.

TOYOTA HI-LUX SURF, 3rd Gen, Top of range, silver, 3.0 diesel, 4x4, MoT ten months, no rust, £2,000. (NC)01299 832156/07742 835429

VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6 Exclusive, 60 plate, 5-dr, grey metallic, petrol, 56,000 miles, good condition. £5,500. 07824 104753.

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FORD KA 2001, MoT December, 70,000 miles, very clean for year. £395.
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PEUGEOT 206 INDEPENDENCE, 2004, 3 door, hatchback, 58,300 miles, red, 11 months MoT, stereo, CD. £1,495 ono. 07954 163237.

PEUGEOT 306 ESTATE, 1999, silver, 1.9 Diesel, 65,000 miles, Oct 2015, £600 ono. 01384 256413.

PEUGEOT 307. 72,500 miles, MoT till Aug. 02 plate, alloy wheels, good runner. £775. 07531 819599.

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(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

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personal

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general

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Change of gear for rally driver Sykes

Rally driving

IT will be all change this season for Stourbridge rally driver Richard Sykes as he embarks on a new championship challenge in a new car.

After several seasons driving a Citroën C2R2 Max in the British Rally Championship Challenge, including a title win in 2012 and runner-up spot in 2013 and 2014, Sykes has acquired ex-DGM Citroën DS3.

He will competing the new BTRDA Mixed Surface championship and the car will be supported by G I Sykes Ltd, Boroughbridge Marina, Bathams Brewery and Body Clinic.

"The British Rally Championship is not running this year and it was an ideal time to change the car, giving us a year to learn about it so we can hit the ground running when the championship returns in 2016," said Sykes.

"The DS3 is amazingly quick and the technology is fantastic as it enjoys a great deal of the electronics developed in the World Rally Championship.

It has been the car to beat at the top level of UK rallying for the last three years.

They have to be one of the most competitive 2wd cars in the rallying world at the moment on both gravel and tarmac, not only here in the UK but also around the globe."

"It's quite a big change for me, I have a lot of things to learn such as driving a left hand drive car which I've not done before, a 6 speed electric gear shift and an engine that only revs to 4000rpm.

The engine has 350 lbs of torque though and provides amazing pulling power. The handling is just amazing."

"The Mixed Surface championship should be good, it's got a mix of forest and tarmac events including an enjoyable trip to the Isle of Man which is one of my favourite places to go rallying.

It will definitely provide a tough test of both car and crew. We don't know who we'll be up against yet but I think there'll be some close competition."

The championship will start in April but Sykes has entered the Riponian rally at the weekend so he can get used to the car.

He is also planning to enter Rally North Wales in March too for an attempt at the "Road to Wales" initiative which has a free entry to Rally GB as a prize.

"I'll have Simon Taylor back as my co-driver for our tenth season together."

Lye are knocked off the top spot

Lye Town 1
AFC Wulfrunians 3

AFC Wulfrunians moved up to eighth place in the Midland League Premier Division after a terrific 3-1 away win that knocked Lye Town off the summit.

Ryan Talbot and Liam Bood gave Wulfs a two-goal lead before substitute Demetri Brown made sure of the victory after Ricky Anslow had pulled a goal back for the hosts.

Wulfs got off to the perfect start, taking the lead as early as the fourth minute when Talbot headed home Mitch McDonald's cross.

Lye's Ben Jevons then shot into the side-netting.

Things took a turn for the worse for Wulfs when Jacob Craner was stretchered off with a knee injury but they regrouped to double their lead seven minutes into the second half. McDonald was again the provider as he slid a neat ball through for Bood to fire homeafter Damien Stevens had saved his initial effort.

Lye responded within two minutes as Anslow fired home a 25-yard free kick after he himself had been bundled over.

Wulfs secured the points with a crucial third goal eight minutes from time through Brown.

Pedmore lose way in league title race

Worcs Cricket Board Indoor League

THE league title race opens up as Pedmore lose their way against a resurgent Oldswinford.

Pedmore (79-3) lost to Oldswinford (81-0) with three overs remaining

For the first time in two seasons the Pedmore batsmen struggled and effectively failed against some tight bowling from Oldswinford. Usually free scoring batsmen Pedmore got stuck in the mud. Matt Porter (28 no) and Sam Peruzza (22) batted without conviction and by the 7th over when they lost their first wicket had managed only 42.

The pressure on the lower order to get runs on the board increased but the Oldswinford bowling remained in control .

Enville 'A' (49 all out) lost to Pedmore 'B' (51-1) with five overs remaining

In a friendly encounter following the withdrawal of Lye from the league, a mixed Enville team played a Pedmore team captained by James Burgoyne with a mixture of experience and youth.

Enville opted to bat and in spite of Matt Branch's contribution of 20 before being run-out with a direct hit Enville struggled against a better bowling performance.

Yeltz dent their hopes of spot in play-offs

Nantwich Town 1 Halesowen Town 0

HALESOWEN missed the chance of improving their play-off prospects when they were beaten by lowly Nantwich.

A 12th-minute goal by Max Harrop, who smashed the ball home from 18 yards, was enough to give the Cheshire outfit the points in the Evo-Stik Premier clash.

The Yeltz rarely threatened in the first half, Iyesden Christie's shot from the edge of the box after 10 minutes clearing the crossbar.

The first chance of the second half fell to Halesowen sub Ben Haseley, whose shot was saved by Terry Smith with comfort. Then Tom Tonks had a volley which was saved by the Nantwich keeper.

As the match entered three minutes of stoppage time Smith had to make two excellent saves to prevent an equaliser.

Nantwich had one final chance when Matty Kosylo broke down the wing before playing in Mark Winslade. But his shot was blocked by Halesowen keeper Craig Sargeant.

Meanwhile, Joel Kettle is poised to leave the Yeltz for Sutton Coldfield Town.

The club are said to be disappointed Kettle has opted to leave after being a key part of the team this season.

Kettle had made30 appearances for the club, scoring two goals in the process.

Joel has had spells with Sutton Coldfield Town previously from August 2012 before joining Stourbridge last year as cover. He joined The Yeltz in the Summer of last year. Also gone is Robert Thomson-Brown who has left the club to join Stratford Town of the Evo Stik Southern South and West Division.

Football

He has agreed to join to get some much-needed game time after being limited to the bench in the second half of the season.

Due to Stratford Town being in a different league The Yeltz will retain the registration of Thomson-Brown and monitor the situation.

In total Robert made 38 appearances, 19 starts and 19 from the bench during whe he scored four goals. The club said they wish him all the best in his playing time at the Stratford club.

Nantwich Town: Smith, Moyo (Dowling 89), White, Bailey, Harrison, M Jones, Cooke, Platt, Clayton (Winslade 66), Harrop (Hudson 63), Kosylo.

Subs not used: Blake.

Halesowen Town: Sargeant, Green, Jones, Forde, Hull, Tilt, Charlton, Tonks, Christie, Daniels, Bragoli.

Subs: Haseley Pearson, Griffiths Turner, Mackenzie.

DK three-zed out by determined Hinckley

The DK pack pushing for an all elusive try but it wasn't to be on the day against Hinckley

DK 3 Hinckley 33

HINCKLEY came to Heathbrook to win and they accomplished their mission.

They went into the huddle at half time 26-3 which included their try bonus point. This meant by the end of the match, and with Peterborough's defeat, they had gone into second place in the league.

Hinckley's game is built around a good pack of forwards, and a fly half Mark Lord. They applied territorial pressure and were able to strike an early blow with a try whilst Danny Hawkins was in the bin for a dangerous tackle.

Jamie Hearn kicked a penalty for DK.

Soon after it was 12-3 with a second try for Hinckley down their left wing.

The Hinckley pack then came into its own, with a powerful surge at a five metre scrum, which lead to a pushover try which was converted.

Then the last play of the half resulted in the Hinckley's fourth try and the bonus point they wanted.

Into the second half, DK were very unfortunate to concede what turned out to be a penalty try.

Hinckley's pack applied the pressure after a reset and the referee was under the posts to witness a penalty try. There was no further scoring.

Keogh in apology on arrest

FORMER Wolves striker Andy Keogh has issued an apology after being arrested in Australia.

The Ireland international was involved in an alleged alcohol-related incident in Adelaide on Sunday night. It followed a 1-1 draw between Adelaide United and his current club, Perth Glory.

Keogh and defender Josh Ridson were both arrested for disorderly conduct .

Keogh said: "I accept full responsibility for my actions, and I also accept the sanctions Perth Glory Football Club has imposed on me.

"As for the police charge, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the matter as it is now in the hands of the courts."

Club well placed in charity run

WITH more than 440 finishers, Dudley and Stourbridge Harriers athletes where well to the fore in this weekend's Action Heart 5 mile Road Race.

Dave Nation had a great run and led the way to finish in third.

Nation's time of 28m 15s was just four seconds behind the second-placed runner.

Ian Mansell showed he is returning to some sort of form with sixth spot in 28.52.

Paul Mountford, who is preparing for the London Marathon, ran an excellent 29.57 for 12th. Distance coach Darrell Bodin was 25th in 32.42 as Stacey Skitt finished 55th in 35.36 and was fourth lady.

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SPORT

Yeltz dented
Squad suffer blow in road to play-offs
Page 35

Three-zed out
DKsquad take another beating
Page 35

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Stour in battle to share the points

Grantham Town 1
Stourbridge 1

STOURBRIDGE battled out a draw in a mid-table Evo-Stik Premier clash to forget at Grantham Town's South Kesteven Sports Stadium where they had to settle for a share of the points.

The Glassboys came out strongly and took the lead in the second minute when Christopher Knight found space on the left before hitting a low shot from 30 yards across the goalkeeper and into the net.

Despite looking second best for most of the first half the Gingerbread men equalised with their first chance on 33 minutes.

The score came when a cross from the right was parried by Stourbridge keeper Dean Coleman and Daniel Meadows scrapped the ball home.

After the break Gary Hackett's side looked to regain the lead and on the 46th minute Kayelden Brown played through Luke Benbow but he saw his attempted saved by Jake Turner.

As the game looked destined for a draw Grantham nearly had the last say when in the 87th minute a long ball found Liam Read but his shot was tipped over as the game ended 1-1.

The Glassboys remain 11th in the table.

Matthew to get a shot

AN unknown darter from Smethwick is heading to the PDC's UK Open after netting a wildcard spot through a qualifier in Wolverhampton.

Matthew Tedstone is now dreaming of upsetting the big boys at the 'FA Cup of Darts' next month, after coming through a three-figure field.

Wolverhampton's Dean Stewart has again also won himself a place – and this year he will be going straight into the second round.

He will be joined at the Butlins holiday resort in Minehead by fellow Wulfrunian Wayne Jones, Dudley's Mark Jones and Stourbridge's Nick Fullwell.

The 128-man UK Open will take place at the Butlin's holiday resort in Minehead and will run from March 6 to 8, in front of the ITV4 television cameras.

Heathens are happy with loyalty of backers

Speedway

CRADLEY boss Will Pottinger has hailed the club's partners for continuing their backing despite their relocation to Perry Barr.

The Heathens saw their future thrown into limbo at the end of last season when their Monmore Green home became unavailable before they quickly secured a move to the Birmingham venue for the new campaign.

Despite their move, they have already enjoyed a hugely successful season off the track with a large number of season ticket sales plus excellent support from local businesses.

Cradley Heath-based Motor Market have stepped up their involvement to become main team sponsors whilst Recycled Aggregates, Curtis Sport and Ron Homer have continued as club partners.

They have also welcomed on board Venue Cuisine as a partner as they continue to build for the defence of their National League title.

After overcoming a rocky period over the winter, Pottinger is thrilled to see local businesses continue to back the Heathens as they prepare for an exciting year.

He said: "We weren't too sure how people would react to us moving to Perry Barr, but to see the reaction we've had not only from fans but from sponsors has been hugely positive.

"We are going into our sixth season now, and to see the level of support the club continues to receive is really tremendous.

"Motor Market have been with us for a couple of years now as team partners, so it's great to see them step up and become our full team sponsors. Of course they are based in Cradley Heath, not very far from the old Dudley Wood track, so there is a nice connection there with the history of the Heathens.

"It's also good to see Recycled Aggregates, Ron Homer and Curtis Sport staying on board after last year and continuing their support despite our move to a new location."

The Heathens side will go through their paces at Perry Barr for pre-season press and practice on Wednesday, March 11, at 2pm.

AMPTHILL MOB RUN OVER STOUR

Stourbridge 12 Ampthill & District 37

IT took until the change of ends for Ampthill's large pack to get on the front foot.

Stourbridge stunned the league leaders with an outstanding first half performance that gave them a fully-deserved lead. But as bodies tired the Bedfordshire side gained the upper hand.

Rugby

Stour worked themselves to a standstill, but ultimately the visitors' bigger guns won the day.

Ampthill flanker Matt Burke then picked up a yellow card for a clumsy high tackle, the penalty was kicked to the 22 and Stour attempted a catch & drive. When it got held up they drove down the middle, recycled patiently through several phases and Ciaran Moore grounded the ball against the base of a post to score.

Gifted

A handling error gifted the visitors possession and a resolute Stour defence kept them at bay but eventually they worked a half-gap for winger Gareth Clarke to score out wide.

Drives by Drew Harper and Moore pulled in defenders and the ball was worked wide to Ben Barkley who blasted through two defenders to score.

The visitors kicked a penalty to the 22 and got their catch & drive going, huge prop Joe Sproston drove from short range and scored.

It was to be a tough second half for Stour, it got worse when neat footwork produced a try for fullback Elliot Clements-Hill.

Though starting 30m out they managed to rumble a further catch and drive over the Stour line for flanker Joe Bercis to score.

The ball squirted out of a ruck with Ampthill's defence stretched and nobody at home on the right side, Toby Handley broke but failed to hear the support runner's call with just one man to beat.

Stour tried to run from deep but found themselves increasingly held up in the contact area, leaving few options but kicks ahead.

A Barkley break gave them much-needed momentum, but a ball carrier got penalised for hanging on in the tackle.

Ampthill kicked to the corner again and a low drive produced a second try for Bercis.

Stour looked to attack from deep but a pass was intercepted and with the defences all at sea winger Darrell Dyer crossed to score.

With their tails up the visitors ran from deep, breaking through a tired-looking defence. A penalty award produced Bercis' hat-trick.

Stourbridge centre Ben Barkley goes on the charge against the Ampthill defence. *Picture courtesy of Ceri Davies*

Foster is first for run club

THERE was a final act of the cross country season for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club before they could hang up their spikes for the year.

The blue hoops took a team to London for the National Cross Country Championships.

The Championships were hosted this year by the South Area and held at Parliament Hill on the fringe of Hampstead Heath in London.

The venue is akin to Wembley or Lords for a cross country runner.

Making light of the conditions Ben Foster was first back for the club in 281st in 46.34, James Wright was 1,015th in 54.52, Gary Bonner was 1,235th in 57.25, Mark Gatenby finished in 57.35 to take 1,252nd place, Dave Norman was 1,352nd in 58.48, Graham Wildgoose came home in 1,539th in 1.10.42, Paul Silk was breathing down his neck in 1,558th in 1.01.52, Mark Homer was 1,609th in 1.02.48 and Mark Judge finished in 1.03.46 in 1,654th position. With teams of six to count this was enough to place DK 109th of 145 teams in attendance.

Ex-Harriers star Geoff dies, 66

TRIBUTES have been paid to former Walsall and Kidderminster Harriers winger Geoff Morris, who has died aged 66.

Morris scored 41 goals in 201 appearances during a nine years at Fellows Park, having joined the Saddlers aged 15 in 1964.

AfterKidderminster, Morris went to Australia.

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